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History Center launches Ferry Street School Park fundraiser

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Niles History Center has launched a new initiative to help the former site of Ferry Street School could soon receive a new lease on life.

The organization announced it has launched a Patronicity campaign to raise funds for the Ferry Street School Park project.

"We are excited to announce our campaign to create Ferry Street School Memorial Park," the organization stated in a Facebook post.

If the campaign goal is met, Patronicity offers a matching grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The History Center Director successfully used Patronicity in 2019 to raise funds for the Chapin Mansion Accessibility project.

"Every dollar you donate is matched to help us reach our goal," the post stated. "Together we can create a community park to memorialize this historic school."

Readers interested in donating or learning more can find the project at patronicity.com/schoolpark. Those preferring to donate offline can do so at the Niles History Center and the contribution will still be matched.

A fire in May 2023 destroyed the majority of the structure with only the façade of the original school building being saved. Ownership of the property was transferred back to the City of Niles in November 2024.

The façade was saved with the goal of preserving the remaining piece and incorporating it into a public space to memorialize the historic significance of the structure and create a community gathering location.

Constructed in 1867 at a cost of nearly $3,000, the Ferry Street School opened in January 1868 as Niles's school for "colored children." In 1870, the Niles school system was integrated, and the facility closed. It reopened as an integrated school in 1873, with

See PARK, Page A6

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BAKING IT HAPPEN

The Grateful Pie Company at Fernwood hosts ribbon cutting ceremony

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A new addition to the Niles-Buchanan culinary scene was celebrated with much fanfare Wednesday afternoon.

Business owners and residents from both communities were on hand at Fernwood Botanical Garden for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for The Grateful Pie Company at Fernwood. Previously located inside The Commerce Center on Colfax in South Bend, the eatery now operates from the Fernwood Café, 13988 Range Rd.

"We are thrilled beyond belief to be here," said Owner and Chef Barbara Furnell. "It doesn't break my heart at all to come here every day and I'm really enjoying the ability to really bake anything and everything that I want. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be coming to Fernwood, so I just love it. Our customers have been absolutely wonderful and we're really looking forward to a beautiful springtime and summer here."

"Today marks an exciting moment for Fernwood and for the Grateful Pie Company at Fernwood, a place where people come together to rest, to reset, to engage with nature,and we're so excited that our guests now have the opportunity to partake

See PIE, Page A6

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Edwardsburg hires two teachers

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg School Board approved the hiring of two new teachers at their latest meeting on Monday.

The district hired a new Elementary Music teacher, Jennifer Tabor, and sixth grade English and Social Studies teacher Elizabeth Colvin. Tabor brings previous experience in music education, including starting an after school program for kids. Colvin has years of experience in Edwardsburg schools serving as a long-term substitute teacher on multiple occasions.

Primary School Custodial staff member Brant Byerly was recognized as the January recipient and Support Staff Team Member of the Month during the meeting. Byerly was chosen for the monthly award after multiple nominations, some of which were read during the meeting, noting his positive impact on students beyond his custodial duties.

"He's working with kids with all sorts of different social skills," said Superintendent Dr. Courtney Szucs. "He takes them under his wing. He just is a true part of the whole Primary community."

Eagle Lake School Principal Jared Melander reported on a new "Word Collectors" initiative at the school. The schoolwide program is targeting student weaknesses in vocabulary, identified during analysis of Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) results. The School Improvement Team, along with a specific vocabulary team, created Word Collectors as a part of a long term goal of improving future scores and increasing word skills among students.

"We knew we had to create something for the kids to get excited about," said Melander.

Students were started on the program with a reading of the book The Word Collector by Peter H. Reynolds. Two words are chosen each week, one by the Vocabulary Committee and the other by students. Each week's words are focused on in the classroom with daily reviews, activities, and deeper learning, while also being emphasized schoolwide through posters and announcements made by students sharing the words and using them in sentences. Two students from Eagle Lake presented one of their announcements as an example to the school board and the audience.

The Edwardsburg School Board approved the required annual opt-in for participation in Michigan Schools of Choice. They also approved a new minimum wage adjustment in order to remain in compliance with the new legal standard.

The board voted to opt out of receiving a portion of funds based on Title III, Part A. After opting out of Title III funds last year, the board set out to create a plan to be able to accept the funds going forward. The district was able to make changes and accept $4000 from Section 41 Bilingual Education funding. The district was required to opt out of a smaller portion amounting to a little more than $200 relating to Part A Immigrant Funds, as the creation of a consortium was required to

See HIRES, Page A7

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Notre Dame named America's Best Large Employer by Forbes

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Forbes has named the University of Notre Dame as America's Best Large Employer for the first time, leading 700 other organizations with at least 5,000 employees.

Notre Dame has appeared on the Best Large Employer list six times, most recently as the 20th-ranked employer and top educational institution in 2024.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who works at Notre Dame for their invaluable contributions to our mission," said University President Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C. "Our accomplished and dedicated employees are our most valuable asset, and it is because of their efforts that the University is receiving this wonderful recognition."

"Being recognized as a Forbes top employer is a testament to the culture of care, belonging and excellence that defines our Notre Dame community," Heather Christophersen, vice president for Notre Dame Human Resources, said. "We strive to create a workplace where every person feels valued, supported and empowered to make a difference both in their own life and in the world."

Over the past three years, Notre Dame has expanded

See BEST, Page A7

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

OBITUARIES

Steven Allan Havener
Robert D. "Bob" Haimbaugh
Gary Hughes
Robert Hunsberger

A7

FRANKLY
TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

Soon the dollar store will be the $10 dollar store. A2

Brandywine girls earn 59-27 Senior Night win over Loy Norrix B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call Frankly at (269) 687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

While working for the Democratic Party, I have been called a communist several times. Where does that put me now that Trump is in Putin's back pocket?

Are we planning on bombing Canada if they don't give into becoming the 51st state? I thought grocery prices and inflation were the first priority of the new Trump presidency?

Elon Musk is a clown. He hired a guy who was previously fired for providing his company's competitor with confidential and proprietary info. Now he is digging through our social security info?

Liberals are worried Trump might actually be successful at putting this country back on track.

I'm just curious as to what is the limit on Trump's outlandishness before any republican steps up and says Trump has gone too far? If he decided to give Russia the state of Alaska, I actually think some republicans in congress would support it.

Everything our leaders say affects the stock market, our 401 K and other values. Do they realize this? The chaos caused has implications which generally turns into the public losing.

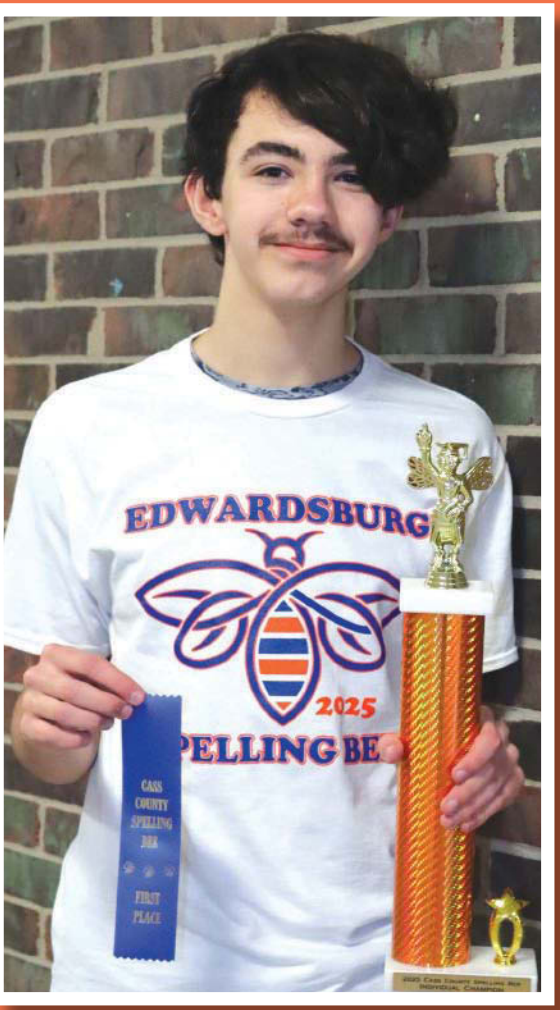
Soon the dollar store will be the $10 dollar store.

Bring on St. Pat's Day and let's all have a green beer together. Things could be much worse in our lives. We need to be thankful for what's good, too!

Hearing the boos of the US national anthem is a painful reminder that countries want to own their sovereignty. Going after Canada, Greenland and Gaza and negotiating away someone else's land and natural resources is not in the best interest of the US. We didn't like it when England did it to us. Who is the bully now?

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	60% Chance of Rain	Rain	Cloudy
28° 18°	33° 23°	42° 35°	53° 48°	59° 31°	37° 27°



SMC HOSTS ANNUAL CASS COUNTY SPELLING BEE

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Elementary and middle school students across Cass County gathered at Southwestern Michigan College Wednesday for the annual Cass County Spelling Bee.

The spelling bee hosted on Feb. 19 at SMC by Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District invited spellers from fourth through eighth grade from Dowagiac Union Schools, Marcellus Community Schools, Edwardsburg Public Schools and Cassopolis Public Schools to compete in a day of competition.

Results from the spelling bee are as follows:

Individual
First – Wyatt Lewis-8th, Edwardsburg
Second-tie – Weston Lewis-7th Edwardsburg;
Owen Killarney-7th, Dowagiac
Fourth – Evan Mikosz (7), Edwardsburg
Fifth – Stella Leighhton (7), Dowagiac

District
First – Edwardsburg
Second – Dowagiac
Third – Cassopolis
Fourth – Marcellus

Fourth grade individual
First – Timiya Williams, Cassopolis
Second – Killian Bishop, Edwardsburg
Third – Izzak Krempetz, Dowagiac
Fourth – Allesandra Bauer, Edwardsburg

Fourth grade team
First – Dowagiac
Second – Edwardsburg
Third (tie) – Cassopolis
Third (tie) – Marcellus

Fifth grade team
First – Dowagiac
Second – Edwardsburg
Third – Cassopolis
Fourth – Marcellus

Sixth grade team
First – Marcellus
Second – Cassopolis
Third – Edwardsburg
Fourth – Dowagiac

Seventh grade team
First – Edwardsburg
Second – Dowagiac
Third – Cassopolis
Fourth – Marcellus

Eighth grade team
First (tie) – Cassopolis
First (tie) – Edwardsburg
Third – Dowagiac
Fourth – Marcellus

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
TOP LEFT: The Edwardsburg Middle School and Intermediate Spelling Bee teams captured the 2025 Cass County Spelling Bee District Trophy.
RIGHT: Edwardsburg eighth grader Wyatt Lewis is the 2025 Cass County Spelling Bee Champion.
BOTTOM LEFT: The Dowagiac fifth grade spelling bee team finished first place in the team competition.

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Buchanan City Commission to receive pay raise

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — Monday's Buchanan City Commission meeting featured news on current and future projects. Commissioners acted on items related to the demolition of the Buchanan Feed Mill and the upcoming streetscape project and discussed plans for possible upcoming state grant applications.

Also Monday, the city's newly appointed compensation commission reported their findings and recommended a pay raise for city commissioners and the mayor. The compensation commission was formed earlier this year and met recently to make the recommendation. This is the commission's first pay raise since 2018.

City Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss said after the meeting that the pay raise is automatically going into effect after city commissioners did not take any action to reject the pay raise. The pay raise question will next come up two years from now.

With the raise, commissioners will get $80 per meeting and $50 plus $25 an hour for special meetings. The mayor will get $100 per meeting and $50 plus $25 an hour for special meetings. Commissioners' pay had been $50 per meeting and $15 an hour for special meetings. The mayor's pay had been $70 per meeting.

With project updates, Community Development Director Richard Murphy reported on the demolition of the old Buchanan Feed Mill and Tire Shop at 111 Railroad St. and 708 S. Red Bud Trail. The work is expected to be done this spring or summer by Melching Inc. of Muskegon. The company was the low bidder with a bid of $193,700.

Murphy said funding for the project is coming from a grant through the Berrien County Land Bank Authority. He and Shea Muller of Point Blue LLC which is overseeing the bidding process said that several companies bid on the project and that Melching's bid actually came in under budget.

"It looks like we can proceed with the project," Murphy said. "We've been working on this for a couple of years, it's a milestone and a tangible improvement to that area. The next step will see what interest there is in the property once the structures are demolished."

The feed mill and tire shop will be demolished in this project. The nearby silos are on a different parcel of property and will not be part of this demolition. Muller said that possible contamination from underground storage tanks on the site is also being addressed through remediation.

Murphy and City Manager Tony McGhee reported on the upcoming downtown streetscape infrastructure project. An informational meeting about the project is scheduled for next Monday, March 3 at 6 p.m. at the Buchanan City Hall.

They said city staff, engineers and contractors will be on hand to answer people's questions. Downtown residents and businesses are especially encouraged to attend. McGhee reported that work started this week with the removal of trees on Front Street and the setting up of detour routes.

The $19.4 million project will replace water and sewer lines as well as downtown streets and sidewalks. A new sanitary sewer line is being constructed from the wastewater treatment plant to the downtown, water and sewer lines will be upgraded and downtown streets and sidewalks will be redone.

Monday, commissioners took action to hire a bond consultant to finish the financing for the project. The city is getting a low interest U.S.D.A. loan to finance most of the project but has a shortfall of $1.5 million to cover. The commission approved an engagement letter with Bendzinski & Co., a bond company.

McGhee said the company will see what interest rates they can find for the city. The goal is to get financing at a low interest rate and that can be paid back within five to seven years.

McGhee also brought state grant possibilities to the commission ahead of an April 1 application deadline. He outlined two possibilities: Kathryn Park improvements and more Riverfront Park improvements.

The Kathryn Park grant would come from the state's Land, Water and Conservation Fund if successful and would pay for playground equipment and parking. He said the project would cost a total of $250,000 with the city providing half that amount as a local match.

The Riverfront Park grant would be to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and pay for restrooms and a pavilion. He said that project could cost $500,000 or more with the local match being 25 percent or more.

Commissioners spoke in favor of both projects and McGhee said he would put together information for both to bring to the commission in March. He said any local funds needed for the projects would be out of the city's 2026-27 budget.

Also Monday, the commission approved a second reading of a new fire prevention ordinance that allows for inspections of local businesses. McGhee said the plan is to inform people about the new ordinance and start inspections in July. He will next bring a rental housing ordinance proposal to the commission.

Niles man gets prison time on drug, tampering charges

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — A Niles man is headed to prison after being sentenced Monday on drug and other charges in Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles courthouse.

John Raymond Patterson, 59, of Niles, pleaded guilty to second offense possession of methamphetamine and tampering with evidence and was sentenced to concurrent terms of three years to 20 years in prison and 30 months to 10 years in prison. He must pay $266 in fines and costs.

Patterson

The two sentences will be consecutive to any sentence he gets for violating his parole from a 2021 conviction for delivery/manufacture of marijuana. He was released on parole on Jan. 9, 2024.

This incident occurred Nov. 30 in Niles Township. He tampered with evidence by trying to chew and swallow the meth in his possession. He was found with over 85 grams of meth.

Defense attorney Shayne Williams said that Patterson has a number of health problems including heart issues, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and asthma. She said Patterson is ready to change his life.

For his part, Patterson said that words could not describe the regret he feels. "The choices I made have been atrocious," he said. "I have accepted my failures and forgiven myself."

Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein said that the Michigan Department of Corrections will have services Patterson can engage in. "You have a chance to change the cycle and come out of prison a better person," he said.

In another case, a South Bend man who has been in jail for nearly a year was given credit for time served for the two felonies he was charged with.

Willie Rayshaun Richardson, 21, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to third-degree fleeing and eluding police and receiving, concealing or possession of a stolen vehicle and was given credit for 346 days already served and ordered to pay $396 in fines and costs.

Richardson

The incident occurred Feb. 3, 2024 in Niles Township. He has been in jail for the 346 days primarily because of his competency questions.

Defense attorney Daniel French said most of the time Richardson has been in jail has involved unraveling his mental health concerns. He said Richardson's mental health issues including paranoia have been addressed with medication.

"He had been put on probation in August 2023 and was on probation when this incident occurred," French said. "He acknowledges his poor judgment. He's a young man and the guidelines are only going to get worse if he commits more crimes."

"I've made a lot of mistakes in my life that I regret," Richardson said.

Judge Hosbein noted that Richardson has received mental health treatment including medication. "It seems like you're doing really well," he told Richardson. "I hope you will keep up with your therapy and counseling. Whatever you've been doing seems to be working."

Two youth will have the chance to keep criminal charges off their record after action Monday.

Roman Randall Parker, 20, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to carrying a concealed weapon and was sentenced to 18 months probation under the Holmes Youthful Training Act, credit for two days served, 100 hours of community service and $618 in fines and costs. The conviction will not be entered if he is successful on probation.

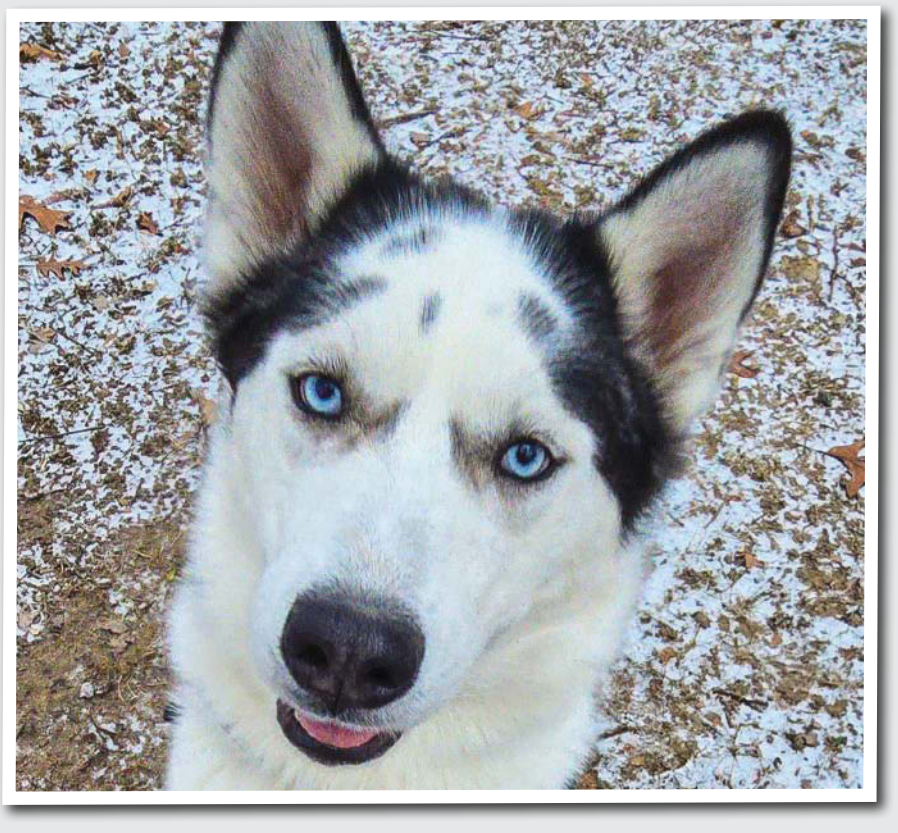
Parker

The incident occurred Dec. 9 in Niles.

Defense attorney Robert Reilman noted that Parker had been visiting people in Michigan and didn't know the laws in Michigan. He said Parker cooperated with police and told them that he

See PRISON, Page A7

PET OF THE WEEK



Nikon is a two year-old Husky with Berrien County Animal Services. He is well-mannered, eager to please, he knows to sit, shake and lay down. Nikon walks well on-leash and enjoys playing with stuffed toys, running in the yard and giving affection. He is neutered, weighs 54 pounds and is current on shots. Contact Berrien County Animal Services at(269) 927-5648.

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Opinion

Slow and steady wins the race

We all live in such a fast-paced world, surrounded by electronics at every turn. There's always some noise — the ticking of the clock, the fridge starting up to keep your food fresh, the morning news playing as you get ready for work, or your phone's notifications dinging in your pocket. Many of us forget to take a moment of calm and quiet for ourselves. We become so caught up in what we have to do next, or what's to come, even if it's days or weeks away. Oftentimes, we forget to just be in the moment and enjoy who we are, where we are, and what we are currently experiencing.

Turnock

I know it's not easy to find a quiet moment, especially in today's society. However, one thing we can do to help quiet our thoughts and relax, even if only for 30 minutes, is to unplug from our phones. It may sound too difficult for some, and I completely understand — many of us now work from our phones, even when we're "off the clock."

What I've started doing is unplugging in the morning. I get out of bed, check my phone once, then continue with my morning routine without music, Facebook, Instagram, or even texting — no phone at all! I open the blinds to welcome the sunshine or sunrise of a new day, allowing natural light to brighten my environment. I go through my bathroom routine without rushing, trying my best not to think about the day ahead.

Next, I focus on my coffee or tea — the simple joy of knowing a beautiful cup of energy is coming my way. I take my time making it and savor the smell of the coffee grounds as I pour them into the coffee maker. There's nothing quite like that smell. While my coffee is brewing, I make sure my cat has his breakfast and water, giving him plenty of morning love, pets, and hugs.

The final sound of the coffee maker is one of the best parts of my morning — the moment I have my coffee. I love to stand by the window and look out at my surroundings, appreciating the beauty of the world around me. I watch the birds going about their day, the cars passing by with commuters on their way to work, and the early risers jogging or running.

As I mentioned before, we all get so caught up in "what's to come" that we forget to enjoy the little moments. That's why I dedicate almost every morning to a slow and steady pace, staying calm, relaxing, and reminding myself that life is beautiful — a life I won't take for granted.

Every other Thursday morning, I give myself extra time to write a column. I calmly ponder what to write about, and then let the words flow. Please, remember that we don't always have to rush. We can slow down and take life at a steady pace.

Peace and love to you all.

Joshua Turnock is a Niles High School graduate and a valued member of Leader Publications' Design Team.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Walberg should work for all people he represents

At a February 20, 2025, town hall meeting in Monroe County, Congressman Tim Walberg was asked about HR 22, a bill now being debated in Congress that would require paper documentation of citizenship, such as a passport, to register to vote or to update one's registration. When asked by a member of the audience about people who can't afford $200 for a passport, Mr. Walberg replied, "Well, then they shouldn't be voting."

This was an open meeting, a recording of which is available on Youtube titled "Feb 20, 2025– Tim Walberg in Bedford." As a constituent of Mr. Walberg's, I want to say how offensive his statement is. Voting is a constitutional right, and creating barriers for citizens to vote is against my values as an American. It is also at odds with Section 2 of the National Voting Rights Act of 1993 which states, "the right of citizens of the United States to vote is a fundamental right; that it is the duty of the Federal, State, and Local governments to promote the exercise of that right; and discriminatory and unfair registration laws and procedures can have a direct and damaging effect on voter participation in elections for Federal office and disproportionately harm voter participation by various groups."

When registering to vote, people must swear that they are citizens. Falsely claiming U. S. citizenship is itself illegal (Title 18 U.S. Code 911). Non-citizens take a huge risk by falsely claiming U.S. citizenship. They can be deported or denied future immigration status. In addition to these risks, illegally voting in a federal election can result in a fine and up to one year in federal prison. In other words, if you were a non-citizen, would you risk voting?

H.R. 22, which Mr. Walberg is attempting to defend, is like deciding to blow up a house because it has a small drip in one faucet. We all agree that non-citizens should not vote. But extensive research has shown that it is a very small, almost non-existent problem. For example, the Bipartisan Policy Center states, "A BPC analysis of The Heritage Foundation's Election Fraud Cases database found only 77 instances of noncitizens voting between 1999 and 2023. A study conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice analyzing 23.5 million votes across 42 jurisdictions in the 2016 general election concluded that there were approximately 30 instances of noncitizens casting votes. Illegal voting, including by noncitizens, is routinely investigated and prosecuted by the appropriate authorities, and there is no evidence that noncitizen voting has ever been significant enough to impact an election's outcome."

Instead of trying to pass a law that will make it harder, if not impossible, for many citizens to vote, Congress could pass a law that would require all 50 states to participate in data sharing and cross-referencing of voter data bases. Michigan belongs to The Electronic Registration Information Center which is a multistate compact designed to enhance the accuracy of voter registration records and prevent duplicate registrations across state lines. Established in 2012, ERIC enables member states to securely share and compare voter data, thereby identifying voters who may have moved, died, or registered in multiple states. This collaborative effort aims to maintain up-to-date and accurate voter rolls, reducing the potential for voter fraud and ensuring election integrity.

I would challenge Mr. Walberg to work for all of the people he represents, even those among us who don't have $200 to spare for a passport.

Naomi Ludman
Dowagiac

NEWS

Niles moves forward with Sycamore Street improvement project

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A key city street in need of improvements will soon receive proper maintenance.

The Niles City Council approved a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation Monday to carry out its planned Sycamore Street improvement project. The project, which will involve improving Sycamore Street from Ninth Street to Thirteenth Street along with other work, qualified for federal funding for completion this upcoming construction season. The project includes cold-milling pavement, and construction of ADA ramps, storm water drainage improvements and resurfacing.

The project is advertised and awarded by the Michigan Department of Transportation in Lansing. Federal funds will pay for up to 80 percent of construction costs with a cap of $162,805 while the City of Niles share is the remainder of the estimated $203,507 construction costs. A contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation is required to be approved and signed by the City prior to awarding the contract.

In other business, council:

• Adopted a Snow and Ice Removal Policy to establish minimum service standards and responsibilities.

• Approved a 3-year contract with Jones & Jones Cleaning of Niles, Michigan to clean City Hall three days a week at a cost of $1,130 per month.

• Approved a month-to-month contract with Jones & Jones Cleaning of Niles to clean the Utility Service Center five days a week at a cost of $2,100.

• Accepted the quote of $5,940.99 from Zoro of Chicago, Illinois for a Biochemical Oxygen Demand incubator for use by the Wastewater Division.

• Approved the quote of $6,866 from Gemini Group of Natick, Massachusetts for printing, mailing, digital media and compliance requirements of the annual State of Michigan Consumer Confidence Report.

• Approved an interlocal agreement with Purchasing Cooperative of America of Houston, Texas for cooperative purchasing services.

• Approved a three-year contract with Cintas Uniform Services of South Bend, Indiana for employee uniforms, towels, and rags at the Wastewater Division and DART with costs based on a per parcel count.

• Approved the quote of $10,590.34 from Boom Tech of Goshen, Indiana for the repair of the aerial boom on the Electric Division's 2019 Ford F550 chassis.

• Approved the quote of $6,529 from Mid City Trailers of Elkhart, Indiana for an enclosed trailer to store and transport the Fire Department's insulation vacuum equipment.

• Approved the Community Development Director to attend the Great Lakes Leadership Academy's Emerging Leader 2025 Program at a cost of $3,500 plus travel expenses.

"We want the public to know that legitimate assistance is available through proper channels."
— Cass County Treasurer Hope Anderson

Cass County warns of phone, email scams

COMMUNITY REPORT

CASSOPOLIS — Cass County Treasurer Hope Anderson and Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz are warning property owners about deceptive and illegal schemes targeting individuals facing property tax delinquency or foreclosure proceedings.

"These scammers specifically target our most vulnerable residents during times of financial hardship," said Cass County Treasurer Hope Anderson. "We want the public to know that legitimate assistance is available through proper channels."

Homeowners should be aware that scammers are increasingly targeting vulnerable property owners with false promises of assistance, only to strip them of equity, ownership rights, or additional funds. And as tax deadlines approach, various schemes often arise intended to take advantage of individuals feeling the financial stress of these time-sensitive dates.

The elderly are particularly at risk.

These schemes are often designed to make a profit off persons facing the tension of property tax or foreclosure deadlines.

Contacts to promote such financial schemes include:

•Personal mailings
•Emails
•Text messages
•Phone calls
•In-person contacts

These contacts often ask the tax/foreclosure stressed individual to "call them" to get "help".

Common Scams to Watch For:

Fraudulent "tax specialists" offering to negotiate with tax authorities for excessive upfront fees

•Property investors offering to "help" by purchasing property at a price far below market value

•Fake government representatives demanding immediate payment via unusual methods

•Deed theft schemes where scammers trick homeowners into signing

See SCAMS, Page A6

Niles Daily Star

ADMINISTRATIVE
PUBLISHER
Rich Cains
(219) 455-2349
rich.cains@leaderpub.com

ACCOUNTING MANAGER
Rhonda Rauen
rhonda.rauen@leaderpub.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & DISTRIBUTION
Amy Glover
(269)687-7717
amy.glover@leaderpub.com

EDITORIAL
MANAGING EDITOR
Maxwell Harden
231-750-5776
max.harden@leaderpub.com

ADVERTISING
Dennis Hinsey
(269) 362-1525
dennis.hinsey@leaderpub.com

DESIGN CENTER MANAGER
Allison Dale
allison.dale@leaderpub.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Joshua Turnock
Caitlin Schlemmer

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
(269) 591-6105

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COMICS & PUZZLES

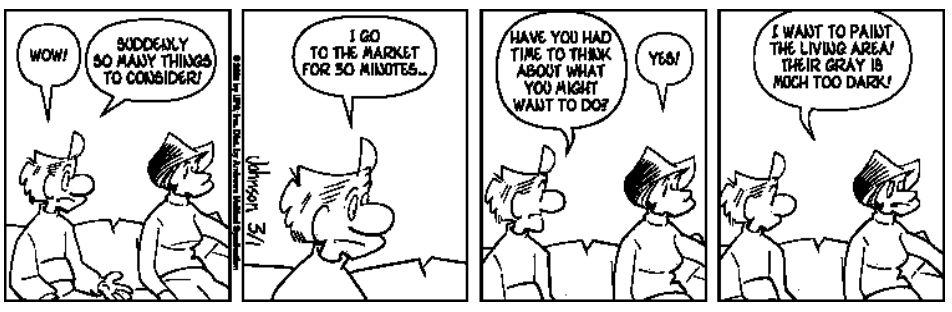
ADAM

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO SEE A DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR BACK.
NAH. IT FEELS FINE NOW!
YOU SAY THAT EVERY TIME AND THEN-
GAHHH! I SHOULDN'T HAVE LIFTED THAT REMOTE!
I'M MAKING YOU AN APPOINTMENT.

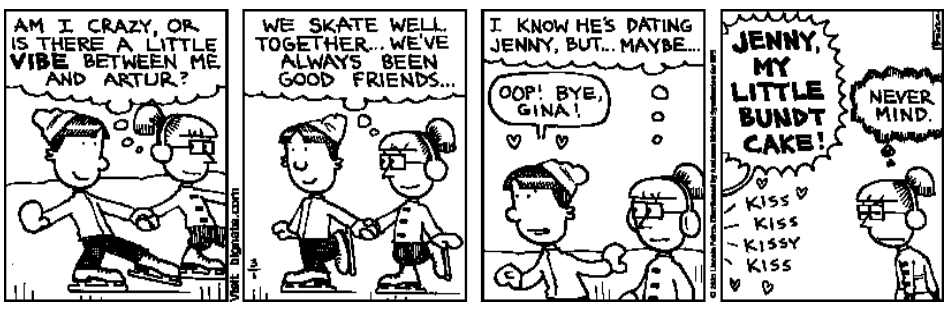
ALLEY OOP

COME SEE ME AFTER YOU DESTROY THE VILLAGE!
AND WE DEFINITELY HAVE TO GO ON THIS QUEST?
IT'S EITHER THAT OR BE BANISHED TO THE SHADOW REALM FOR ALL ETERNITY.
I THOUGHT IF WE DIDN'T DO THE QUEST, WE'D JUST HAVE TO SHOVEL HORSE POOP.
THE SHADOW REALM IS 95% HORSE POOP!
NOOOO!

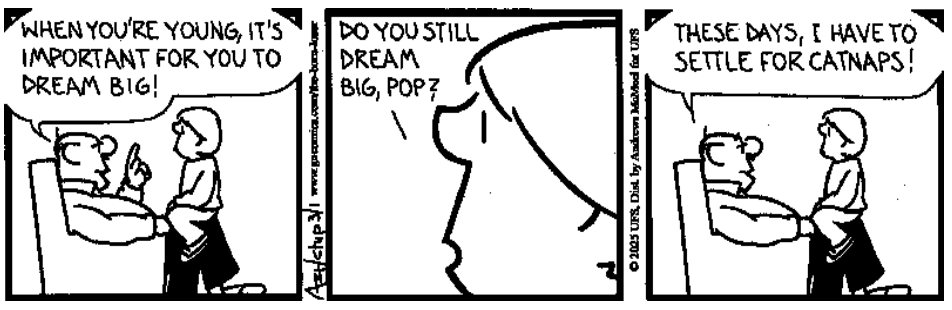
ARLO & JANIS


WOW!
SUDDENLY SO MANY THINGS TO CONSIDER!
I GO TO THE MARKET FOR 30 MINUTES..
HAVE YOU HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO DO?
YES!
I WANT TO PAINT THE LIVING AREA! THEIR GRAY IS MUCH TOO DARK!

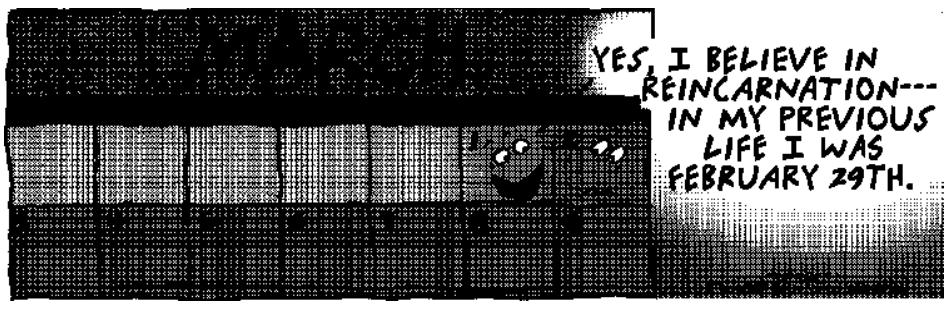
BIG NATE


AM I CRAZY, OR IS THERE A LITTLE VIBE BETWEEN ME AND ARTUR?
WE SKATE WELL TOGETHER... WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD FRIENDS...
I KNOW HE'S DATING JENNY, BUT... MAYBE...
OOP! BYE, GINA!
JENNY, MY LITTLE BUNDT CAKE!
NEVER MIND.
KISS
KISS
KISSY
KISS

BORN LOSER



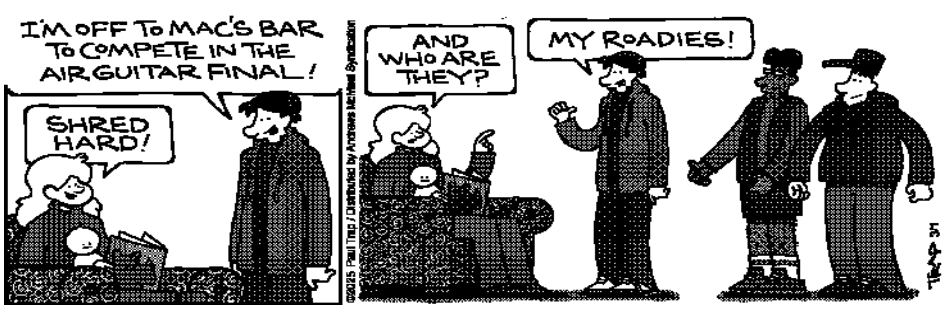
FRANK & ERNEST



GRIZZWELLS

CHILDREN AREN'T BORN RACIST... THAT HAS TO BE TAUGHT...
WHICH IS WHY I RAN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE AND WAS ELECTED...
...TO TEACH IT
GROWN-UPS ARE CRAZY
GONNA BE A LONG FOUR YEARS
CLICK
POP

THATABABY



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SODOKU PUZZLE

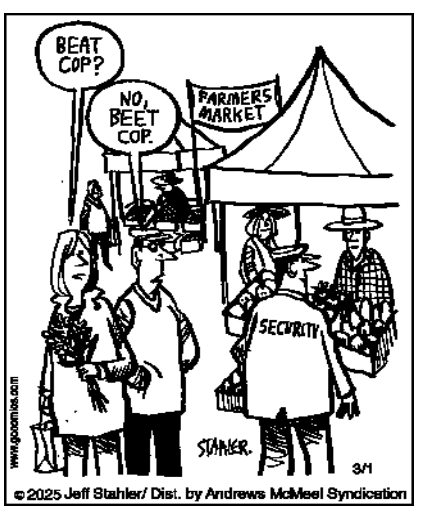
HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

				7	6		4	9
	2			5		3		
		9			3	5		
	3		1	6			8	
2				9				5
	1			8	5		2	
		7	8			2		
		2		3			9	
5	9		6	2				

MODERATELY CONFUSED



REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

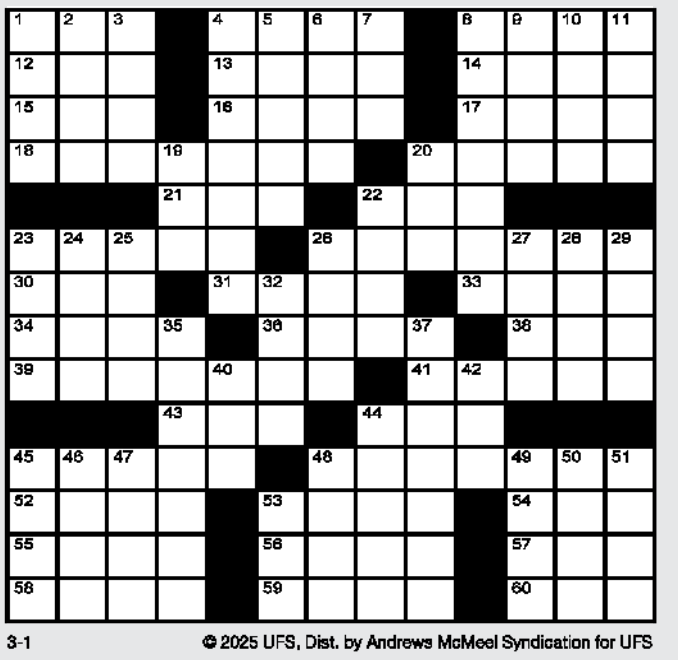
ANSWER ON PAGE 6

ACROSS

1 "— Max: Fury Road"
4 Thick carpet
8 Encounter
12 Mature
13 Promontory
14 Not for
15 Male animal
16 Stratagem
17 — of passage
18 Expression of admiration
20 Fruity drink
21 "— more thing ..."
22 Scot's cap
23 Fragrant flower
26 Ate greedily
30 Pother
31 Nimbus
33 Opera by Verdi
34 PBS science show
36 Precept
38 Thickness measure
39 Exalt
41 King Minos' island
43 Rage
44 Fire remains
45 Storybook elephant
48 Instructed
52 Departure
53 Actress — Sorvino
54 "— Maria"
55 Singing voice
56 Word of regret
57 Bee follower
58 Whitetail
59 Depend (on)
60 Terminus

DOWN

1 Grocery store
2 Culture medium
3 Actress — Moore
4 Crumple (up)
5 Terre —, Indiana
6 Altar's place
7 "— whiz!"
8 Xylophone cousin
9 Oklahoma city
10 Diminutive suffix
11 Rank
19 Big snake
20 Hack
22 Gadget
23 Highway division
24 Graven image
25 "All You Need Is —"
26 Adhesive
27 Juicy fruit
28 Use a blue pencil
29 Valley
32 Commedia dell'—
35 Pilot
37 "The Agony and the —"
40 Abbr. In timetables
42 Letter after pi
44 Of hearing
45 Droplet
46 Auto part
47 Nip
48 Scrabble piece
49 Speed contest
50 Regular
51 Ownership document
53 Spoil



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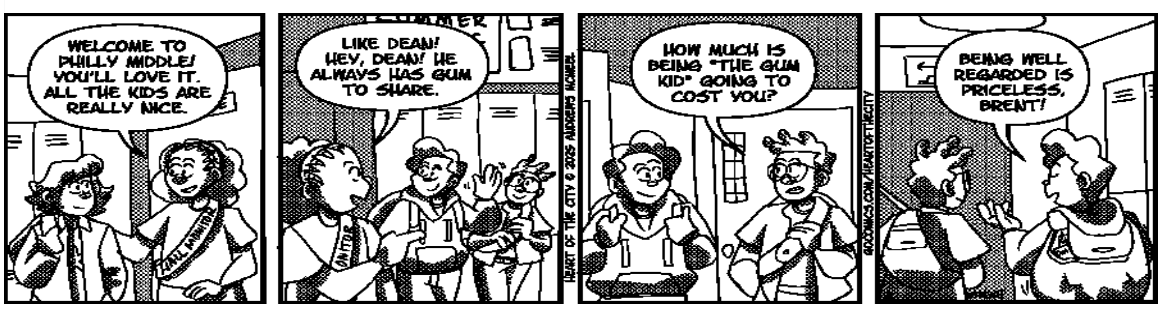
BREVITY

HEART OF THE CITY


WELCOME TO PHILLY MIDDLE! YOU'LL LOVE IT. ALL THE KIDS ARE REALLY NICE.
LIKE DEAN! HEY, DEAN! HE ALWAYS HAS GUM TO SHARE.
HOW MUCH IS BEING "THE GUM KID" GOING TO COST YOU?
BEING WELL REGARDED IS PRICELESS, BRENT!

Brandywine school board hosts CTE programs

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Brandywine Board of Education members heard reports about the district's Career Technical Education programs at their meeting Monday night.

February is Career Technical Education Month and board members took the opportunity to hear from teachers and students about the programs Brandywine offers.

Superintendent Travis Walker reported that the district offers several different programs including auto shop, machine tool, cabinet making and millwork, broadcasting and journalism, computer aided design, business and accounting.

"Brandywine has a robust program for a district our size," he said. "They are doing amazing work, it's really cool to see some of the stuff they're doing every day."

Brandywine CTE Director Kirk Shafer, other staff and students spoke to the board during the meeting. Shafer said that students are learning real world skills they can use after high school and are also in some cases preparing to compete in state championships.

He told board members that the person leading the business and accounting program is not only teaching the students enrolled in the CTE program but also all high school seniors. The state has instituted a new curriculum and graduation requirement to make sure students know how to handle personal finances when they graduate high school.

Shafer and others said they look forward to the revamped CTE facility that is coming thanks to the bond issue approved by voters last May. The new facility is expected to be open for the start of the 2026-27 school year. The expansion will allow the district to host more students from around the county to the existing programs.

Another change coming to the program will be a move next year to get students into jobs in their chosen fields for half of the day, Shafer said.

Students talked about how being involved in the CTE program has changed their high school careers and their outlook for the future. One girl said that she loves working with her hands and that being in the wood shop class has given her new confidence.

Two girls taking the broadcasting and investigative journalism class said that they've also gained confidence and learned new skills including interviewing people, researching information and solving cold cases. The class will soon be releasing a podcast about what they've done.

A practice started last month continued at Monday's meeting with reports from the district's three building principals and assistant superintendent Amanda Lezotte. They highlighted what's going on in their buildings right now and future activities such as an art and literacy night and book fair on March 26 at the elementary school.

Board members continued a discussion started in January about whether to have a district volunteer policy. The issue came up in January when a longtime volunteer appealed a decision by Walker to not allow him to continue to coach because of a felony conviction more than two decades ago.

Monday, board members and Walker discussed whether to have a volunteer policy and members decided informally that a new policy isn't needed and to allow Walker to make the final decision.

Walker said he would consider a number of issues such as how many years it has been since a person's conviction and whether there were multiple charges, assaultive charges or charges involving children.

Board members also heard an update about their decision to include a student on the board as a non voting member. Walker said four students have applied and he will bring information to the board for their review next month.

The Erly to perform at Strockroom East next weekend

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Local band The Erly will be returning to Stockroom East Saturday, MArch 8 for their first South Bend show of 2025.

The band, recognized as Red Chuck Productions' Best Local Live Band of 2024, was on the road to play in Nashville when we spoke on the phone about the upcoming event.

"I'm excited to share our progress from that time," said keyboardist Simon Kauffman Hurst, referring to the past year of touring on their latest album, Salem Lights, and a winter residency at Goshen, Indiana's Elephant Bar, playing every Tuesday for faces new and old.

The latest trip south is part of an increased schedule of touring and live shows as the band continues to grow its sound and fanbase. The Erly has stuck a stride as they're shifted to less standard practicing, exploring their sounds on stage in front of a live audience and in the recording studio, chasing little pieces of magic found in those moments and allowing them to evolve the band.

"We still want to pull out the element that may even surprise us on stage," said guitarist and vocalist Trevor McDonald.

The Stockroom East show will provide the opportunity for such surprises. Fans can expect to hear new songs as the band headlines the venue for the first time. The Erly regularly grace stages in bars, record stores, and other local venues, but the Stockroom show will put them in a room larger than most. The venue allows for a bigger crowd, but also an intimate proximity to the stage.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

"It's a great place to interact with the crowd," described bassist and vocalist Collin Mattiford.

Those uninitiated in the experience of a live Erly show can expect a high energy performance channeling the best of rock and roll, soul, and jam band passion. Kauffman Hurst can rarely remain seated behind the keys, while never missing a note, Mattiford and McDonald play as if they're reaching beyond the ceiling into the heavens, and drummer Fran Gleason makes his presence known wall to wall from behind the kit. Audiences can expect an evening focused on the music.

"There are lots of great venues, bars, etc. in the area, but it's nice to have a venue like Stockroom where the music is at the forefront," said Gleason.

Stockroom East has become known for bringing in larger acts from outside of the area, while supporting local artists and merging their audiences, often at the same show.

Supporting The Erly at the show will be local favorites Joe Baughman + The Righteous Few, known for artsy performances and an alluring stage presence.

"They're just a fun band," said Kauffman Hurst. "When they play music live, they understand it's also a show."

The Erly are hoping to bring plenty of their South Bend fan base to the show, along with new faces attracted to Baughman or the venue. They'll be testing out the new songs currently in progress, see what emerges naturally, how the crowd reacts, and how the tunes evolve in real time.

"Especially in a crowd like South Bend, we feel comfortable enough to go up there and try out a new song, see how it goes," described Gleason.

The Erly will arrive with new music, updated merchandise, and a lot of excitement. Discount advance tickets for the March 8th show are available now by visiting stockroomeast.com. More information can be found at theerlyband.com.

Justin Flagel is the founder of Red Chuck Productions, where he writes, tells stories, and creates new media. Follow his work at redchuckproductions.com. Feedback can be directed to contact@redchuckproductions.com.

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SCAMS

Continued from page A4

over their property

•Phony loan modification services requiring upfront payments for assistance never provided

Such purported "help or assistance" can sometimes result in the property owner relinquishing all rights to the property---even when the property owner has significant equity in the property---- rather than working with the Treasurer to try and keep your property and minimize any negative outcome.

Some of these third-party contacts are criminal in nature.

If Cass County readers are contacted by someone other than the Cass County Treasurer's Office offering to "help" you with a delinquent property tax issue or a property foreclosure, contact your Cass County Treasurer's Office immediately.

Protect your property rights. Contact your County Treasurer's Office FIRST at (269) 445-4468.

PIE

Continued from page A1

in a very thoughtfully prepared meal or snack during their visit to Fernwood," said Mary Krinock, Fernwood's Executive Director. "We're just thrilled to be here and look forward to hosting all of you in the cafe and at Fernwood again soon."

The Grateful Pie Company is open to the public during Fernwood's operating hours, offering both dine-in and take-out options.

"Fernwood is a gem in our county, in our area," said Buchanan Chamber Executive Director Brandon DeJaynes. "A lot of us feel like this is just our backyard. This is a destination for people in the region. A lot of visitors come through here, so it's really a pleasure to always step foot in Fernwood. I know that every time I mention Grateful Pies to anybody, the compliments just start pouring out."

The café menu includes soups, salads, sandwiches, pot pies, and pizzas. Homemade baked goods are sold in the garden's gift shop, including fresh pies, loaves of bread, granola, lemon lavender bars and Fernwood's carrot cake.

We're excited to highlight not just the dessert options, but the catering options too," added Greater Niles Chamber Executive Director Ryan Boeskool.

More information, including the café and catering menus, can be found online at fernwoodbotanical.org/dining.

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

M	A	D		S	H	A	G		M	E	E	T		
A	G	E		C	A	P	E		A	N	T	I		
R	A	M		R	U	S	E		R	I	T	E		
T	R	I	B	U	T	E		C	I	D	E	R		
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E	L	E	V	A	T	E		C	R	E	T	E		
			I	R	E		A	S	H					
B	A	B	A	R		T	U	T	O	R	E	D		
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A	L	T	O		A	L	A	S		C	E	E		
D	E	E	R		R	E	L	Y		E	N	D		

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

1	5	3	2	7	6	8	4	9
7	2	4	9	5	8	3	1	6
6	8	9	4	1	3	5	7	2
9	3	5	1	6	2	7	8	4
2	7	8	3	9	4	1	6	5
4	1	6	7	8	5	9	2	3
3	6	7	8	4	9	2	5	1
8	4	2	5	3	1	6	9	7
5	9	1	6	2	7	4	3	8

PARK

Continued from page A1

the west wing added in 1903. From 1956 to 1975 the School for Exceptional Children was located here. In 1975, concerned citizens began restoring the original building to its nineteenth century style.

Nineteenth century one-room schools in this community typically contained a woodburning stove, woodbox, water bench, coat pegs, wooden blackboards and long rows of desks. One teacher often taught two grades. Lessons were in reading, writing, spelling, numbers, declamation and geography. The building received a historical marker in 1980 from the state's Michigan History Division.

For several years, the building was home to the Ferry Street Resource Center, which assists area residents in securing resources and to provide educational and life-enrichment programs and activities, with a goal of bridging existing educational, cultural and societal gaps that exist within the community.

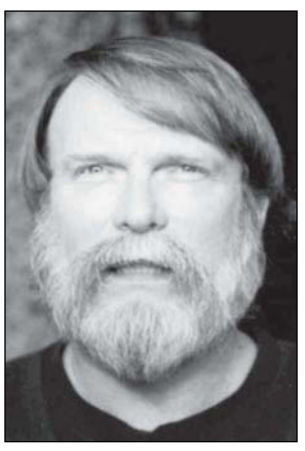
In September 2023, FSRC moved to its new location at 317 N. 7th St. – across the street from the site of Ferry Street School.

DEATH NOTICES

Steven Allan Havener, 72, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Saturday, February 22, 2025. Services will be provided by and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Robert D. "Bob" Haimbaugh, 88, of Lichfield, Michigan, passed away on Monday, February 24, 2025. Arrangements are entrusted to the Eagle Funeral Home-George White Chapel in Litchfield, MI.

OBITUARIES



Gary Hughes

February 28, 1954 - February 18, 2025

Gary Allen Hughes, 70, of Edwardsburg, died peacefully but unexpectedly Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

His life began February 28, 1954 in Niles, Michigan, the second of four children born to

Frank and Olive "Rusty" Hughes.

Gary enjoyed motorcycles, fishing, and horses. He always had a dog with him and enjoyed their company throughout his life. His whole life was his family. He included them in games and looked forward to spending time with his grandchildren. He would enthusiastically include them in playing dominoes, poker, and pinochle as well as other card games. He also looked forward to playing chess with his grandson Andrew as well as other loved ones. Gary loved sporting events, specifically college football and basketball. He was always a Notre Dame fan, and later became a Michigan State fan after his son Rick graduated from MSU. He always looked forward to going out to Outback Steakhouse and was their #1 fan. He was not much of a cook (and burnt most of it, including garlic bread) but enjoyed good food. He was a man of many trades, including being a CNA, a train brake man, and most notably a truck driver. He loved traveling and enjoyed his time on the road, as well as traveling on cruises. Gary had a contagious sense of humor and there was no "off" button to his jokes.

Gary will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his special friend

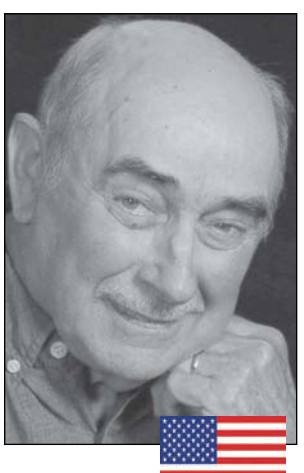
Sheila Hensley; son, Rick (Marilyn) Myers; daughter, Tiffany (Lamonte II) Joiner; stepsons, John Hensley, Nathan Hensley; grandchildren, Alexis Myers, Andrew Myers, Mister Joiner, Lamonte Joiner III,

Matthew Hensley; sister, Dawn Wells; brother, Frank "Buddy" Hughes; and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Diane Larson; and nephew, Daniel Wells.

Family and friends will gather for a memorial service Saturday, March 8, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Edwardsburg Presbyterian Church, 68961 Lake Street, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112. (Please be aware that GPS can be misleading occasionally.) Following the service there will be a gathering in the church fellowship area to share a bit to eat and continue sharing memories and telling stories.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.



Robert Hunsberger

February 24, 1927 - February 24, 2025

Robert F. Hunsberger, a devoted husband, loving father, grandfather and skilled carpenter, passed away on February 24, 2025, on his 98th birthday. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Robert was born on February 24, 1927, at 402 Tuthill, Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, to parents Floyd Hunsberger and Lola Franklin Hunsberger. Robert graduated from Dowagiac Union High School in 1945. He served in the United States Army from July 1945 to December 1946 and was stationed in Salzburg, Austria with the Occupation Forces from December 1945 to November 1946.

On October 25, 1958, he married Denise Vandercar in Niles, Michigan. In 1967 he started his own business as a licensed builder/remodeler and retired in the mid 1990's.

He loved spending time with his family, building or fixing things in his workshop, deer hunting, playing golf and being the official photographer at family gatherings. He was kind, humble, humorous and gave selflessly. Though he may no longer be with us, the love, lessons, and memories he leaves behind will forever be a part of the lives he touched.

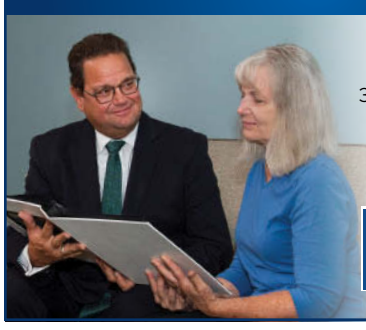
Surviving are his wife of 66 years - Denise Hunsberger; one son - Van Robert Hunsberger (Jill) of Ann Arbor, Michigan; and a granddaughter - Rachel Hunsberger of Troy, Michigan.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Floyd and Lola Franklin Hunsberger; two brothers, Ron and Jerry Hunsberger; and four sisters - Betty Cox, Doris Loupee, Pat Raiford and Marianne Gould.

The family is grateful for the wonderful and compassionate care given at the Cass County Medical Care Facility. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the Cass County Medical Care Facility, 23770 Hospital St, Cassopolis, MI 49031 or Dowagiac First United Methodist Church, PO Box 393, Dowagiac, MI 49047.

A funeral service to celebrate Robert's life will be held at 1:00pm on Saturday, March 8, 2025, Clark Chapel - Starks Family Funeral Home at 405 Center Street, Dowagiac, Michigan, where friends may visit with his family from 12:00pm until the time of service. Pastor Chris Momany of Dowagiac First United Methodist Church will officiate. Interment will follow at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens, Niles, Michigan. Please visit Robert's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to his family at www.clarkch.com.

Celebrate a life



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HIRES

Continued from page A1

receive them. Though Edwardsburg did reach out to other local districts, they were unable to create a consortium.

Szucs updated the board on the status of snow days in the district, noting that all forgiven days had been used up, as well as two additional days. The State of Michigan does allow for a waiver for an extra three days, which Edwardsburg intends to apply to receive.

BEST

Continued from page A1

its employee wellness center; enriched its emotional well-being, caregiving and education benefits for employees; and announced the addition of a new on-campus child care facility.

Forbes partnered with market research firm Statista to compile this year's list, based primarily on anonymous survey responses from current and former employees.

Survey respondents were asked if they would recommend their employer to others and to rate their employer based on a range of criteria, including salary, work environment, training programs and opportunities to advance.

The responses were tallied and analyzed along with additional survey data from the past three years to account for fluctuations in the data, with more recent data and evaluations from current employees weighted more heavily than others.

Forbes has been ranking America's Best Large Employers for 10 years. It also ranks the best mid-size employers.

To explore Notre Dame career opportunities, visit jobs.nd.edu.

PRISON

Continued from page A3

had a gun.

"I didn't know the laws, I take full responsibility," Parker said. "It was very irresponsible of me to not look up the laws."

An 18 year-old New Jersey woman pleaded guilty to resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced under the Holmes Youthful Training Act to 18 months probation, credit for two days served, 100 hours of community service and $618 in fines and costs. The conviction will not be entered if she is successful on probation.

The incident occurred Sept. 20, 2024 when the woman was a student at Andrews University in Oronoko Township. The woman was asked to leave and refused to do so.

Defense attorney Kaitlin Locke said the woman had never been in trouble before and has since returned to New Jersey and enrolled in a college there. "This incident exploded into something that never should have happened," Locke said.

"Police told her to stop and she continued to walk away," she added. "She knows her behavior was inappropriate. A lot of this was due to her age, she understands now that she can't control other people's actions, only her own."

> "Young people make mistakes. We only ask that you learn from it and it sounds like you did ... Everything is going to be okay, I hope you understand that."
>
> — **Judge Hosbein**

Judge Hosbein acknowledged the woman's youth. "Young people make mistakes," he said. "We only ask that you learn from it and it sounds like you did ... Everything is going to be okay, I hope you understand that."

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BASKETBALL

Brandywine advances to district final; Cassopolis falls to Bridgman

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications
Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — The Niles Brandywine boys basketball team has had its share of struggles this season.

Thanks to a stellar defensive performance, the Bobcats (12-10) were able to flourish this time in Wednesday's 57-45 Division 3 district semifinal win over White Pigeon at Ross-Beatty High School in Cassopolis.

Bridgman handed Cassopolis (13-10) a 61-56 loss in the other semifinal.

"We've had moments where we've looked good and other times where our youth has shown. Our kids played hard tonight. There were a couple times we had mental breakdowns, but I was pleased. I thought we did a nice job on the glass. White Pigeon has some good shooters and I felt we did a nice job of them most of the night," said Niles Brandywine coach Nathan Knapp.

Three players scored in double figures for Brandywine led by 5-foot-8 sophomore guard Elijah Burt with 21 points. Junior guard Nylen Goins added 20 and raised his career scoring total to 998. Ryder Richard, another junior, added 12 points for the Bobcats and J.J. Henry and Will Hubbard scored two apiece.

Brandywine made 25 field goals, including six three pointers, and made the only free throw it attempted.

Goins and Richard made two triples each.

Brandywine held a slight edge on White Pigeon on the rebounding charts 33-27.

Hubbard led the Bobcats with nine boards, while Burt and Richard pulled down six each.

"We have lot of pieces on this team, but we just have to get them all to come together on night's like these. Our kids still get in a hurry sometimes offensively. We just need to take our time. We've seen a lot of growth from earlier this season," Knapp said.

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Niles Brandywine junior guard Nylen Goins (1) converts a layup as White Pigeon's Brody Block (4) defends underneath.

Senior Ty Strawser led White Pigeon with a game-high 24 points. All eight of

See FINAL, Page B2

BRANDYWINE GIRLS
EARN 59-27 SENIOR NIGHT WIN OVER LOY NORRIX

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications
Contributor

NILES — Sharing the wealth. That unselfish approach to the game is what has the Niles Brandywine girls basketball team one game from attaining a perfect regular season.

Team work was once again a key factor for No. 1-ranked Brandywine, now 21-0, Tuesday as Josh Hood's Lady Bobcats rolled past Division 1 Kalamazoo Loy Norrix (3-15) 59-27 in the Bobcat Den on Senior Night.

Brandywine ends the regular season with a non-conference road test at Division 1 St. Joseph (16-4) on Thursday.

Prior to tipoff, Brandywine honored seniors Miley Young, Adeline Gill, Adelyn Drotoz, Ireland Prenkert, Lexi Troup, Paige Krisher and Niyah Mason.

"Senior Night at Niles Brandywine is always special because these girls have been through the wars. If you stick it out all four years that means you are a very hard worker and have held yourself to a high standard in our program," Hood said.

All seven of the Lady Bobcat seniors scored in a first-half that saw Brandywine jump out to leads of 19-4 after one quarter and extend its advantage to 31-6 by halftime.

Eleven of Brandywine's 13 players scored in the contest led by sophomore guard Lily Gill with 10 points. Young, Drotoz and Adeline Gill contributed eight apiece, while McKenna Price and Troup added six each for the Lady Bobcats, who made 21-of-68 (31 percent) attempts from the floor and 10-of-14 (71 percent) at the foul stripe.

Adeline Gill also pulled down six rebounds for Brandywine, while Lily Gill had five and Young and Nason yanked down four each.

Loy Norrix (3-15) was led in scoring by Jordan Ivy and Sariah Lawrence with six points apiece.

The Knights shot 12-of-45 (27 percent) from the floor and 2-of-6 (33.3 percent) at the free-throw line.

Brandywine reeled off the game's first 19 points, including triples from Drotoz, Troup and Price. Young also scored four during the Lady Bobcats early run.

Lawrence's pair of free throws with 36.3 seconds left in the opening period put Loy-Norrix on the scoreboard. The Knight scored again seconds late on a layup by Lawrence.

Brandywine led 19-4 entering the second quarter.

Lilly Gill scored five points for Brandywine and the Lady Bobcats got key layups from Drotoz, Adeline Gill and Prenkert to open up a 31-6 lead by intermission.

"All of our seniors scored in the first half and they worked very hard. Anytime you can sub five in and five out and not lose anything out on the court, that says a great deal about the depth of our program. Much of that has to do with our seven seniors," Hood said.

Young scored six points, all on layups, during the third quarter to help push the Brandywine advantage to 42-12 entering the final stanza.

"We spread the ball around and shot it pretty well. We've watched several films on Loy-Norrix and we noticed that they always play zone. We took them out of their bread and butter which is either a 1-2-2 or a 1-3-1 zone. If you are shooting the ball well very early, you force them to play a defense they aren't accustomed to playing. That means you are doing your job correctly," Hood said.

"I was very proud of the way we shared the ball. Lexi Troup isn't a normal starter but she hit back-to-back threes to get us going in the first half. I don't think anyone had more than 10 points individually tonight. These girls care more about our team success than the name on the back of their jersey."

PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA HAGEN

WRESTLING

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

SMC wins wrestling district championship

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College Wrestling followed up its three-peat as Michigan Community College Athletic Association (MCCAA) champions by taking down nationally-ranked #11 Triton College of River Grove, Ill., and eight other Midwest teams in Palatine, Ill., Feb. 23 to claim the 2025 Great Lakes District Championship.

The Roadrunners finished with a team score of 153.5 to Triton's 139.0. Host Harper College had 108.0 and Muskegon scored 105.0.

SMC Head Coach Todd Hesson won Great Lakes District Wrestling Coach of the Year.

All 10 Roadrunners wrestlers finished in the top three of their weight classes and now will prepare for the NJCAA National Championships in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on March 7.

- 125 Santon Ramon, second place
- 133 Kaden Lapaugh, second place
- 141 Colby Klinger, champion
- 149 Bryce Brust, champion
- 157 Dayveon Rupert, champion
- 165 Jeirmi Scales, third place
- 174 Riley Hess, third place
- 184 Nathan Andrina, champion
- 197 Austin George, third place
- 285 Greg Crawford, third place

BASKETBALL

Edwardsburg, Buchanan advance to district title game

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Edwardsburg and Buchanan boys basketball teams extended their seasons Wednesday in Division 2 district semifinal play.

The Eddies defeated Berrien Springs and the Bucks bested Benton Harbor 39-36.

The Eddies overcame an 11-0 deficit to start the game and trailed 25-22 at halftime. In the third quarter, Edwardsburg used a 13-4 run to take a lead it would not relinquish. Brody Schimpa led all scorers with 21 points and Connor Solarek and Matt Enders scored eight apiece. JJ Frakes led Berrien Springs with 17 points and Micah McFarland had 15.

"We knew they'd be tough," said Edwardsburg coach Jared Frick. "We played them the first game of the year but they're obviously much more improved. JJ's a really good player but we like to think we have some good players too, and Brody was great tonight. We started the game off poorly down 11 but we had our own 11-0 run in us. I'm just proud of them. They work really, really hard."

In the second game of the evening, the Bucks overcame a slow start offensively to edge the Tigers in a slugfest. Trailing 26-17 in the third quarter after a 22-12 halftime deficit, the Bucks used a 16-0 run to take a 33-26 lead. The Tigers answered with an 8-0 run in the fourth to take a 34-33 advantage before the Bucks closed the game on a 6-2 run.

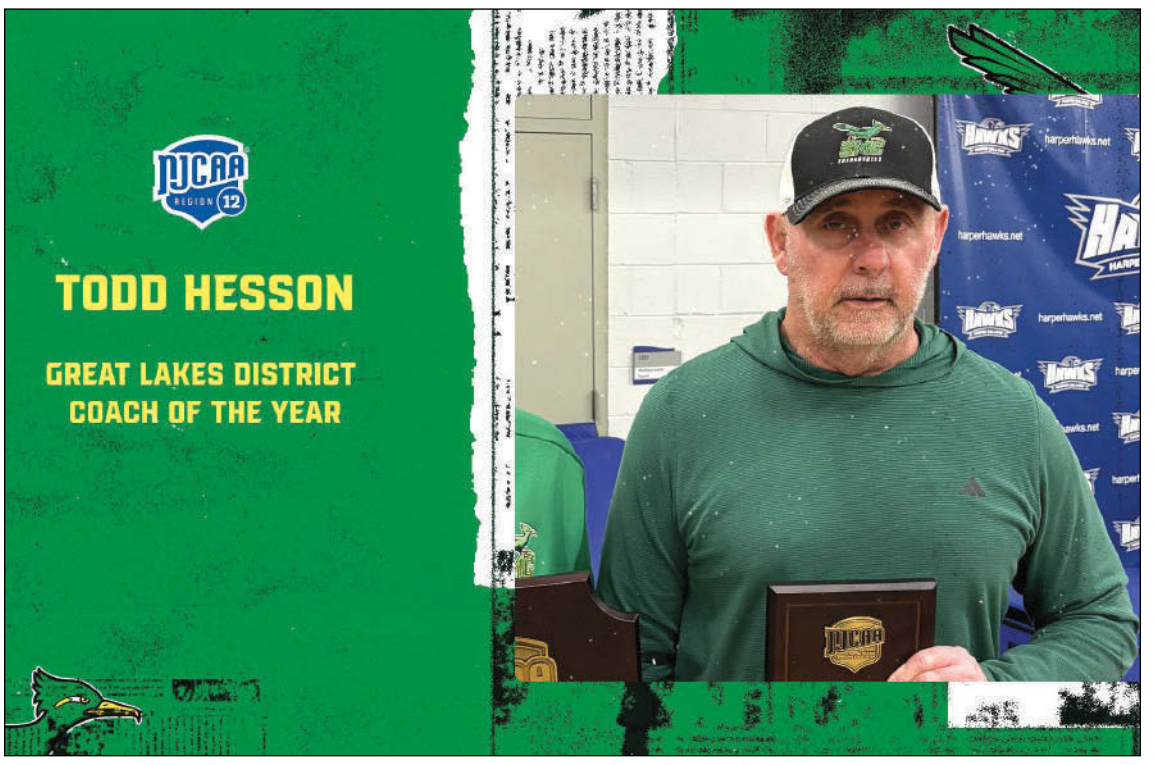
Karmine Brown led Buchanan with 14 points and Liam McBeth added 11 points while Logan Wiggins tallied seven. Kasean Hobbs had 13 points to lead Benton Harbor and Zamier Clayton added 10.

The Bucks and Eddies faced off Friday night in the Division 2 district title game. The recap of that game will be found online at leaderpub.com and will be in the March 8 print edition of the newspaper.

See TITLE, Page B2

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF DOUGLAS

WRESTLING



Hesson named Great Lakes District Wrestling Coach of the Year

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — SMC Head Coach Todd Hesson has been named Great Lakes District Wrestling Coach of the Year.

Coach Hesson has led the Roadrunners to three straight MCCAA championships and today bested nationally-ranked No. 11 Triton College to claim the 2025 Great Lakes District Championship.

All ten SMC wrestlers finished in the top 3 of their weight classes and now will prepare for the NJCAA National Championships in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on March 7.

TRACK & FIELD

ND's Griffith named ACC Freshman of the Week

COMMUNITY REPORT

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Notre Dame distance runner Drew Griffith was named as the Atlantic Coast Conference Indoor Men's Track Freshman of the Week as announced by the ACC office on Tuesday afternoon.

A native of Malvern, Pennsylvania, Griffith turned in a one mile time of 4:00.58 at the Alex Wilson Invitational for a new personal record over the weekend. His time is tied for the second-fastest indoor mile time by a freshman in the ACC this year and is tied for 26th overall among all ACC men in the mile to-date.

An ACC Freshman of the Week in cross country in the fall, it is the first ACC Indoor Freshman of the Week recognition of his track career.

FINAL

Continued from page B1

Strawser's baskets came on triples. Senior Jordan Pisco added nine points for the Chiefs (16-7), while classmate Mekhi Singleton added seven, Josh Davidson three and Chris Temple two.

White Pigeon made 16 field-goal attempts, including nine triples, and 4-of-5 (80 percent) free-throw attempts.

With the game tied at 6-6 early in the opening stanza, Brandywine went on a 8-3 run to finish the period. The Bobcats got two consecutive baskets from Richard and Goins to close the quarter out and take a 14-9 advantage.

Burt's triple and a Goins' mid-range jumper extended the Bobcats' lead to double digits, 19-9. Back-to-back triples by Strawser pulled the Chiefs back within five, 22-17. But Henry drove inside for a bucket and Goins drained a triple moments later to put Brandywine on top 27-19 entering halftime.

Brandywine built its lead to as many as 12 points in the third. Goins opened the second half with a triple and knocked down another shot inside moments later. Burt added a three pointer and also scored on a putback to put the Bobcats in front 37-25. Strawser drained another triple lessening the Chiefs' deficit to nine, 37-28. But Burt drove inside for a pair then added a layup and free throw to put Brandywine up 42-30 entering the final stanza.

White Pigeon whittled the Brandywine lead to nine, 50-41 with 3:21 left in the fourth quarter on Strawser's triple. But the Bobcats sealed the win with Goins' bucket in the lane followed by Richard's triple and a layup.

"Brandywine's record isn't indicative of how good they are. We knew coming in that they would play tremendous defense, put alot of ball pressure on us and trap us. They also play great help-side defense and they shot the ball very well," said White Pigeon head coach Shawn Strawser. "We didn't shoot the ball very well ourselves, but that's a credit to their defense. They were successful in taking us out of what we like to do."

In looking ahead to Friday's final against Bridgman, a team the Bobcats beat 64-60 in overtime in early January, Knapp stated his ballclub must stop the Bees' penetration.

"Mike Miller is a great coach. He always has his kids ready to play. They have some great shooters and are smart basketball players. It should be a great game. We have to stop their penetration and keep them off the glass because they are going to come in ready," Knapp said.

Bridgman 61, Cassopolis 56

A late come-back fell just short for a young Cassopolis ballclub.

The Rangers (13-10) found themselves trailing the Bees by 14, 54-39 with 4:50 left in the fourth quarter.

Cassopolis managed to fight back and get back within five points, 56-51, on Ayden Gillam's three pointer with less than a minute left. Teammates Trevon Peterson-Evans and Aarenn Buck-Hooper both made shots in the waning seconds, but Bridgman sealed up the win by making 5-of-6 free throws.

Cassopolis went through a tough stretch near the end of the third and early in the fourth quarter where the Rangers couldn't score.

"Bridgman did a nice job during that span of holding the basketball. At one point we just couldn't buy a basket. We'd either have a turnover or the ball would go in and out," said Cassopolis head coach Charles Superczynski II.

"I felt we took some pretty good shots all night. Sometimes they fall and other times they don't. We did a nice job executing some things that I don't think Bridgman expected. We went to a lot of man-to-man defense and just tried to be a big physical presence and chase their shooters off the three. I thought our kids were real active. We're a bit undersized and they controlled the rebounding. I was pleased with how we responded the last four minutes of the game."

Cassopolis, which returns all 14 players on its roster next season, jumped out to an early 16-11 lead. Charlie Pagel's triple at the end of the period trimmed the Bees' deficit to two, 16-14 entering the second quarter.

The Ranger increased its lead to six points, 20-14 on a nice pair of back-door cuts for baskets from Lucas Williams and Peterson-Evans.

Bridgman eventually evened the game up at 24-24 on Ethan Stine's triple. But the Rangers answered with a bucket inside from Buck-Hooper and a Gillam triple to send the hosts into halftime with a 29-26 advantage.

The contest was tied three times in the third quarter before Cassopolis took its final lead, 39-38, on Jaylen Pratt's short jumper. The Bees capped off the period with a 6-0 run to grab a 44-39 lead entering the fourth.

Pratt finished with 19 points for Cassopolis. Gillam added 12, Peterson-Evans had 11 and Lucas Williams totaled 10 for the Rangers, who made 24 field goals, including six triples, and 2-of-5 free-throw attempts.

Cassopolis' coach is looking forward to having his whole squad returning next season.

"We will have three seniors next year and still be fairly young with sophomores and juniors. This group learned how to play together. It took a while for us to get used to one another after losing a lot of seniors from last year," said Cassopolis' coach.

Bridgman was paced in scoring by Pagel with 25. Wade Haskins added 10 for the Bees, while Stine finished with nine and Teddy Ippel added eight.

The Bees made 23 shots from the floor, including six three pointers, and made 9-of-12 free-throw tries.

"Cassopolis' quickness bothered us. I thought we played poorly the whole game from an offensive and defensive standpoint. We had some first-game jitters, but I thought we got rid of that by halftime and played a good second half," said longtime Bridgman head coach Mike Miller.

The Bobcats and the Bees faced off Friday night in the Division 3 district title game. The recap of that game will be found online at leaderpub.com and will be in the March 8 print edition of the newspaper.

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Cassopolis freshman postplayer Aaerren Buck-Hooper (11) scores inside on Bridgman Wednesday in the district semifinals.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

TITLE

Continued from page B1

DIVISION 2

EDWARDSBURG 54, BERRIEN SPRINGS 49

At Dowagiac

EDWARDSBURG (54): Joe Shively 2, Brody Schimpa 21, Conor Solarek 8, Blaise Crist 6, Law Gates 2, Michael Wright 7, Reed Gates 0, Matt Anders 8. Totals 17 14-23 54.

BERRIEN SPRINGS (49): Joe Chimwamchere 2, Brady Blasko 2, Ethan McCrary 0, Micah McFarland 15, J.J. Frakes 17, Alex O'Dell 3, Brody Brewer 10. Totals 19 10-14 49.

Edwardsburg 11 22 35 54

Berrien Springs 15 25 32 49

3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 6 (Schimpa 4, Wright 2), Berrien Springs 1 (Frakes 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Edwardsburg 14, Berrien Springs 18 (Blasko). Records: Edwardsburg 17-7, Berrien Springs 17-5

BUCHANAN 39, BENTON HARBOR 36

At Dowagiac

BUCHANAN (39): Tyler Frame 2, Preston Payne 0, Liam McBeth 11, Karmine Brown 14, Jake Franklin 5, Logan Wiggins 7. Totals 13 7-16 39.

BENTON HARBOR (36): Latrell Johnson 5, Jkwon Lewis 0, Avion Wilson 0, Desean Mathison 2, Zamier Clayton 10, Kasean Hobbs 13, Damonee McBride 6. Totals 15 4-7 36.

Buchanan 6 12 29 39

Benton Harbor 6 22 26 36

3-point baskets: Buchanan 6 (Brown 3, McBeth 1, Franklin 1, Wiggins 1), Benton Harbor 2 (Johnson 1, Hobbs 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 8, Benton Harbor 22 (A. Wilson). Records: Buchanan 17-6, Benton Harbor 15-8

DAILY DATA

FRIDAY, FEB. 21

BOYS BASKETBALL
EDWARDSBURG 56, VICKSBURG 26
At Edwardsburg
VICKSBURG (26): Hunter Ambs 3, Grant Balazs 3, Mitchell Beyer 2, Gage Schiedel 4, Austin Androsky 5, Jordan Diekman 4, Anthony Marchese 2, Braylen Vallier 3. Totals 9 5-7 26.
EDWARDSBURG (56): Joe Shively 2, Brody Schimpa 20, Maverick Gates 3, Conor Solarek 8, Blaise Crist 4, Michael Wright 4, Ayden Billingsley 2, Reed Gates 3, Matt Anders 10. Totals 19 13-15 56.
Vicksburg 4 9 17 26
Edwardsburg 14 28 47 56
3-point baskets: Vicksburg 3 (Ambs 1, Androsky 1, Vallier 1), Edwardsburg 5 (Schimpa 3, M. Gates 1, Solarek 1). Total fouls: Vicksburg 14, Edwardsburg 13. Records: Vicksburg 10-12 (7-7 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 15-7 (9-5 Wolverine Conference).
NILES 57, PLAINWELL 51
At Plainwell
NILES (57): Quinton King Jr. 0, Brayden Favors 20, Andre Wells 16, Brenden Olsen 16, Acie Kirtdoll 0, Derek Hill Jr. 3, Donovyn Williams 2. Totals 21 8-16 57.
PLAINWELL (51): Drew Rayman 9, Drew Nelson 10, Chib Amaezechi 9, Nate Launt 2, John Amazechi 14, Chad Winenger 7. Totals 21 4-12 51.
Niles 11 29 39 57
Plainwell 13 30 36 51
3-point baskets: Niles 7 (Favors 3, Wells 3, Hill Jr. 1), Plainwell 5 (Rayman 3, Nelson 2). Total fouls: Niles 15, Plainwell 14. Records: Niles 12-10 (9-5 Wolverine Conference), Plainwell 14-6 (10-4 Wolverine Conference).
GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 59, BERRIEN SPRINGS 21
At Berrien Springs
BRANDYWINE (59): Adeline Gill 17, Karleigh Byrd 4, Adelyn Drotoz 6, Ireland Prenkert 6, Mackenna Price 5, Paige Krisher 9, Miley Young 8, Niyah Mason 2, Brook Brumitt 2. Totals 22 8-8 59.
BERRIEN SPRINGS (21): Lillian Weigand 4, Zion Ellis 4, Kathryn Bergan 2, Hindra Pawa 2, Addison Frakes 2, Aubre Smith 7. Totals 8 4-10 21.
Brandywine 11 26 49 59
Berrien Springs 6 9 14 21
3-point baskets: Brandywine 7 (Drotoz 2, Prenkert 2, Price 1, A. Gill 1, Krisher 1), Berrien Springs 1 (Ellis 1). Total fouls: Brandywine 17, Berrien Springs 16. Records: Brandywine 19-0 (8-0 Lakeland Conference), Berrien Springs 16-3 (6-2 Lakeland Conference).
CASSOPOLIS 58, LAWRENCE 27
At Lawrence
CASSOPOLIS (58): Mackenzie Boyer 7, Janayla Franklin 3, JaMya Hart 3, Madalynn Yakel 7, Nola Hawkins 2, Alexandria Westphal 3, Madison Nelson 21, Ryley Bowsher 12. Totals 22 3-9 58.
LAWRENCE (27): Hailey Camp 4, Colleen McCaw 3, Brooklyn Remelts 6, Carolina Mancera 10, K. Lena 4. Totals 9 6-12 27.
Cassopolis 7 19 42 58
Lawrence 3 15 24 27
3-point baskets: Cassopolis 11 (Nelson 5, Bowsher 3, Boyer 1, Franklin 1, Yakel 1), Lawrence 3 (Remelts 2, Lena 1). Total fouls: Cassopolis 13, Lawrence 8. Records: Cassopolis 11-6 (10-4 Southwest 10), Lawrence 12-7 (9-6 Southwest 10).
VICKSBURG 33, EDWARDSBURG 29
At Edwardsburg
VICKSBURG (33): Scarlett Hosner 7, Kendra Cooley 2, Madison Cooley 4, Emily Zemitans 0, Makayla Allen 12, Hannah DeVries 8. Totals 10 8-14 33.
EDWARDSBURG (29): Shelby Laubach 2, Ella Zache 6, Maddie Pobuda 14, Kourtney Zarycki 4, Mya Eberlein 1, Kya Shier 2. Totals 10 5-10 29.
Vicksburg 7 14 23 33
Edwardsburg 10 15 19 29
3-point baskets: Vicksburg 5 (Allen 3, DeVries 2), Edwardsburg 4 (Pobuda 4). Total fouls (fouled out): Vicksburg 13, Edwardsburg 15 (Laubach). Records: Vicksburg 18-2 (12-1 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 12-8 (6-7 Wolverine Conference).
PLAINWELL 52, NILES 40
At Plainwell
NILES (40): Jessie Thornton 11, Tanaya Brown 11, Kayla Kiggins 14, Ari Gerrits 4, Mia Holmes 0. Totals 12 11-12 40.
PLAINWELL (52): Sophie Munch 10, Alyssa Weldon 12, Alayna Ranney 3, Anna Overway 16, Kaylee VanAtter 10. Totals 19 10-14 52.
Niles 6 16 21 40
Plainwell 16 23 35 52
3-point baskets: Niles 5 (Kiggins 4, Brown 1), Plainwell 4 (VanAtter 3, Weldon 1). Total fouls: Niles 12, Plainwell 12. Records: Niles 6-15 (1-12 Wolverine Conference), Plainwell 8-11 (4-9 Wolverine Conference).

SATURDAY, FEB. 22

GIRLS BASKETBALL
CENTREVILLE 50, CASSOPOLIS 46
At Cassopolis
CENTREVILLE (50): Mara Webb 2, Mary Stears 15, Ellie Reed 10, Drew Alexander 7, Berkley Shindgledecker 10, Lena Reed 6. Totals 16 17-31 50.
CASSOPOLIS (46): Mackenzie Boyer 6, Janayla Franklin 0, JaMya Hart 3, Madalynn Yakel 17, Malayah Flowers 2, Nola Hawkins 2, Madison Nelson 10, Ryley Bowsher 6. Totals 18 10-27 46.
Centreville 12 19 37 50
Cassopolis 9 22 28 46
3-point baskets: Centreville 1 (L. Reed 1), Cassopolis 0. Total fouls (fouled out): Centreville 22, Cassopolis 25 (Boyer, Bowsher). Records: Centreville 15-4 (15-0 Southwest 10), Cassopolis 11-7 (10-5 Southwest 10).

MONDAY, FEB. 24

BOYS BASKETBALL
DISTRICTS
DIVISION 2
EDWARDSBURG 59, NILES 58 (2 OTS)
At Dowagiac
EDWARDSBURG (59): Joe Shively 0, Brody Schimpa 14, Conor Solarek 9, Blaise Crist 12, Michael Wright 10, Reed Gates 2, Matt Anders 12. Totals 19 19-24 59.
NILES (58): Quinton King Jr. 3, Brayden Favors 29, Andre Wells 11, Brenden Olsen 6, Acie Kirtdoll 5, Derek Hill Jr. 0, Donovyn Williams 4. Totals 22 9-12 58
Edwardsburg 12 17 30 44 50 59
Niles 19 24 37 44 50 58
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 2 (Solarek 1, Wright 1), Niles 5 (Favors 3, King Jr. 1, A. Kirtdoll 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Edwardsburg 16, Niles 19 (A. Kirtdoll). Records: Edwardsburg 16-7, Niles 12-11
BUCHANAN 48, DOWAGIAC 28
At Dowagiac
BUCHANAN (48): Tyler Frame 0, Preston Payne 0, Liam McBeth 3, Ari Johnson 3, Karmine Brown 27, Jake Franklin 2, Logan Wiggins 8, Owen Thompson 5. Totals 18 4-6 48.
DOWAGIAC (28): Jamal Williams 2, Braylon Wade 3, Devin Rock 3, Isaiah Fitchett 10, Kaleb Smith 1, Aiden Martin 3, Chase Frazier 4, Riley McCaffrey 2. Totals 8 9-11 28.
Buchanan 18 33 43 48
Dowagiac 5 11 19 28
3-point baskets: Buchanan 8 (Brown 7, McBeth 1), Dowagiac 3 (Wade 1, Rock 1, Martin 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 12, Dowagiac 7. Records: Buchanan 16-6, Dowagiac 1-19
DIVISION 3
CASSOPOLIS 62, CONSTANTINE 20
At Cassopolis
CASSOPOLIS (62): Jaylen Pratt 11, Lucas Williams 22, Trevon Peterson-Evans 13, Ayden Gillam 6, Tyson West 2, Aarenn Buck-Hooper 2, Jamiere Pratt 3, Waylon Yakel 3. 25 7-12 62.
CONSTANTINE (20): Reid Chapman 0, Braden Bienz 8, Joshua Bontrager 4, Iven Baker 2, Riddick Terry 6. Totals 9 0-2 20.
Cassopolis 19 43 57 62
Constantine 2 7 18 20
3-point baskets: Cassopolis 5 (Williams 2, Jaylen Pratt 1, Jamiere Pratt 1, Yakel 1), Constantine 2 (Bienz 2). Total fouls: Cassopolis 5, Constantine 10. Records: Cassopolis 13-9, Constantine 0-21
GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 56, BATTLE CREEK CENTRAL 41
At Niles
BATTLE CREEK CENTRAL (41): Kylieria Guest 16, Nae'Ary Wilson 5, A'mya Hodges 10, Zaxarionna Caldwell 2, Myliyah Mosery 8. Totals 17 7-12 41.
BRANDYWINE (56): Adeline Gill 14, Karleigh Byrd 6, Adelyn Drotoz 1, Ireland Prenkert 1, Mackenna Price 5, Lily Gill 7, Paige Krisher 3, Miley Young 14, Niyah Mason 5. Totals 20 11-18 56.
Battle Creek Central 9 23 34 41
Brandywine 20 34 42 56
3-point baskets: Battle Creek Central 0, Brandywine 5 (A. Gill 1, Price 1, L. Gill 1, Krisher 1, Mason 1). Total fouls: Battle Creek Central 13, Brandywine 14. Records: Battle Creek Central 11-5, Brandywine 20-0
BRONSON 64, BUCHANAN 39
At Bronson
BUCHANAN (39): Caitlin Horvath 5, Maddie Young 2, Aspen Berry 2, Evyn Pruett 4, Justyce Cashier 2, Katie Ailes 15, Alyssa Carson 7, Akirrah Robinson 2. Totals 15 6-9 39.
BRONSON (64): Braylynn Dow 3, Ava Hathaway 2, Lydia Wells 4, Itzel Albarrah 5, Veronica Bir 2, Ashlynn Harris 12, Aubree Calloway 20, Payton Springstead 14, Bernice Luviano 2. Totals 24 12-18 64.
Buchanan 2 16 30 39
Bronson 14 35 52 64
3-point baskets: Buchanan 3 (Ailes 2, Horvath 1), Bronson 4 (Calloway 2, Wells 1, Dow 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 15, Bronson 10. Records: Buchanan 11-10, Bronson 19-2

TUESDAY, FEB. 25

GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 59, KALAMAZOO LOY NORRIX 27
At Niles
KALAMAZOO LOY NORRIX (27): Jaela Moncrief 2, Jordyn Ivy 6, Soniya Brown 4, Sariah Lawrence 6, Lea Harrison 3, Lakia Palmer 4, Lindsey Zirkebbac 2. Totals 12 2-6 27.
BRANDYWINE (59): Adeline Gill 8, Karleigh Byrd 4, Adelyn Drotoz 8, Ireland Prenkert 2, Mackenna Price 6, Lily Gill 10, Lexi Troup 6, Paige Krishler 2, Miley Young 8, Niyah Mason 3, Brook Brumitt 2. Totals 21 10-14 59.
Loy Norrix 4 6 12 27
Brandywine 19 31 42 59
3-point baskets: Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 1 (Harrison 1), Brandywine 7 (Drotoz 2, Price 2, Troup 2, L. Gill 1). Total fouls: Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 16, Brandywine 6. Records: Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 3-15, Brandywine 21-0
BUCHANAN 60, BENTON HARBOR 9
At Buchanan
BENTON HARBOR (9): Jaiden Tackett 3, Za'Keira Baxter 2, Lovely Douglas 0, Aalejah Clark 0, Javie Swift 4. Totals 3 2-4 9.
BUCHANAN (60): Caitlyn Horvath 8, Maddie Young 15, Aspen Berry 1, Justyce Cashier 6, MaKynna Williams 3, Cora Weinberg 3, Gabie Frain 0, Katie Ailes 9, Alyssa Carson 8, Cam Carlson 2, Akirrah Robinson 5. Totals 22 6-13 60.
Benton Harbor 5 5 9 9
Buchanan 18 32 50 60
3-point baskets: Benton Harbor 1 (Tackett 1), Buchanan 10 (Horvath 2, Young 2, Cashier 2, Carson 2, Weinberg 1, Robinson 1). Total fouls: Benton Harbor 14, Buchanan 7. Records: Benton Harbor 0-15 (0-8 Lakeland Conference), Buchanan 12-10 (4-4 Lakeland Conference).
EDWARDSBURG 62, MATTAWAN 20
At Mattawan
EDWARDSBURG (62): Shelby Laubach 8, Ella Zache 9, Maddie Pobuda 26, Kourtney Zarycki 6, Mya Eberlein 8, Kya Shier 5. Totals 26 2-4 62.
MATTAWAN (20): Caitlin Ryan 6, Claire Winans 11, Kearsten Schultz 1, Chloe Nellenbach 0, Taylor Bernardi 2. Totals 5 6-9 20.
Edwardsburg 15 41 54 62
Mattawan 3 8 12 20
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 8 (Pobuda 8), Mattawan 4 (Winans 3, Ryan 1). Total fouls: Edwardsburg 9, Mattawan 8. Records: Edwardsburg 13-8, Mattawan 3-19
Highlight: Pobuda scored 24 first-half points on eight 3-pointers for Edwardsburg.
VICKSBURG 57, DOWAGIAC 19
At Vicksburg
DOWAGIAC (19): Marlie Carpenter 10, Brenna Mott 1, Nyah Moss 2, Evie Lock 0, Olivia McIntosh 3, Bree Campbell 3. Totals 8 1-5 19.
VICKSBURG (57): Scarlett Hosner 23, Kendra Cooley 4, Lainey Wilson 3, Emily Zemitans 8, Ella Mann 2, Makayla Allen 11, Hannah DeVries 6. Totals 21 9-12 57.
Dowagiac 0 8 15 19
Vicksburg 22 32 47 57
3-point baskets: Dowagiac 2 (McIntosh 1, Campbell 1), Vicksburg 6 (Allen 3, Hosner 2, Wilson 1). Total fouls: Dowagiac 10, Vicksburg 5. Records: Dowagiac 5-15, Vicksburg 19-2
CASSOPOLIS 60, BANGOR 31
At Bangor
BANGOR (31): Madison Lennox 6, Jaelynn Little 16, Alexis Wisniewski 1, Klivana Osteen 7, Isabella Macedo 0, Cielo Maldonado 1. Totals 10 8-15 31.
CASSOPOLIS (60): McKenzie Boyer 10, Janayla Franklin 5, JaMya Hart 2, Madalynn Yakel 6, Maliyah Flowers 5, Alaina Grissom 1, Nola Hawkins 6, Alexandra Westphal 0, Madison Nelson 4, Ryley Bowsher 21. Totals 22 8-17 60.
Bangor 3 7 12 31
Cassopolis 14 32 51 60
3-point baskets: Bangor 3 (Little 3), Cassopolis 8 (Bowsher 3, Boyer 2, Franklin 1, Flowers 1, Hawkins 1). Total fouls: Bangor 14, Cassopolis 14. Records: Cassopolis 12-7 (11-5 Southwest 10), Bangor 8-12 (6-11 Southwest 10).

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26

BOYS BASKETBALL
DIVISION 2
BUCHANAN 39, BENTON HARBOR 36
At Dowagiac
BUCHANAN (39): Tyler Frame 2, Preston Payne 0, Liam McBeth 11, Karmine Brown 14, Jake Franklin 5, Logan Wiggins 7. Totals 13 7-16 39.
BENTON HARBOR (36): Latrell Johnson 5, Jkwon Lewis 0, Avion Wilson 0, Desean Mathison 2, Zamier Clayton 10, Kasean Hobbs 13, Damonee McBride 6. Totals 15 4-7 36.
Buchanan 6 12 29 39
Benton Harbor 6 22 26 36
3-point baskets: Buchanan 6 (Brown 3, McBeth 1, Franklin 1, Wiggins 1), Benton Harbor 2 (Johnson 1, Hobbs 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 8, Benton Harbor 22 (A. Wilson). Records: Buchanan 17-6, Benton Harbor 15-8
EDWARDSBURG 54, BERRIEN SPRINGS 49
At Dowagiac
EDWARDSBURG (54): Joe Shively 2, Brody Schimpa 21, Conor Solarek 8, Blaise Crist 6, Law Gates 2, Michael Wright 7, Reed Gates 0, Matt Anders 8. Totals 17 14-23 54.
BERRIEN SPRINGS (49): Joe Chimwamchere 2, Brady Blasko 2, Ethan McCrary 0, Micah McFarland 15, J.J. Frakes 17, Alex O'Dell 3, Brody Brewer 10. Totals 19 10-14 49.
Edwardsburg 11 22 35 54
Berrien Springs 15 25 32 49
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 6 (Schimpa 4, Wright 2), Berrien Springs 1 (Frakes 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Edwardsburg 14, Berrien Springs 18 (Blasko). Records: Edwardsburg 17-7, Berrien Springs 17-5
DIVISION 3
BRANDYWINE 57, WHITE PIGEON 45
At Cassopolis
BRANDYWINE (57): J.J. Henry 2, Nylen Goins 20, Eligha Burt 21, Will Hubbard 2, Ryder Richard 12, Emerson Gogley 0. Totals 25 1-1 57.
WHITE PIGEON (45): Mekhi Singleton 7, Josh Davidson 3, Jordan Pisco 9, Chris Temple 2, Ty Stower 24. Totals 16 4-5 45.
Brandywine 14 27 42 57
White Pigeon 9 19 30 45
3-point baskets: Brandywine 6 (Goins 2, Burt 2, Richard 2), White Pigeon 9 (Stower 8, Pisco 1). Total fouls: Brandywine 6, White Pigeon 8. Records: Brandywine 12-10, White Pigeon 16-7
BRIDGMAN 61, CASSOPOLIS 56
At Cassopolis
BRIDGMAN (61): Ethan Stine 9, Teddy Ippel 8, Wade Haskins 10, Chuck Pagel 25, Andrew Mabry 6, Jared Schroeder 3. Totals 23 9-12 61.
CASSOPOLIS (56): Jaylen Pratt 19, Lucas Williams 10, Trevon Peterson-Evans 11, Ayden Gillam 12, Aarenn Buck-Hooper 4. Totals 24 2-5 56.
Bridgman 14 26 44 61
Cassopolis 16 29 39 56
3-point baskets: Bridgman 6 (Pagel 3, Stine 1, Haskins 1, Schroeder 1), Cassopolis 6 (Williams 2, Gillam 2, Jaylen Pratt 1, Peterson-Evans 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Bridgman 7, Cassopolis 17 (Peterson-Evans, Jamiere Pratt). Records: Bridgman 17-5, Cassopolis 13-10.

EDWARDSBURG BOWLING TEAMS EARN TOP 10 FINISHES IN REGIONALS

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The Edwardsburg boys and girls bowling teams capped historic seasons last week. The girls team placed fourth in the regional tournament and the boys team placed seventh, the highest placements in school history. Brayden Hardy placed 10th overall for the boys and Nikki Maurer and Bailey Mauer placed seventh and fourth for the girls to become the first state-bound bowlers in school history. In addition, boys coach Steve Harman and girls coach Ken Grinage were each named Wolverine Conference Coach of the Year.

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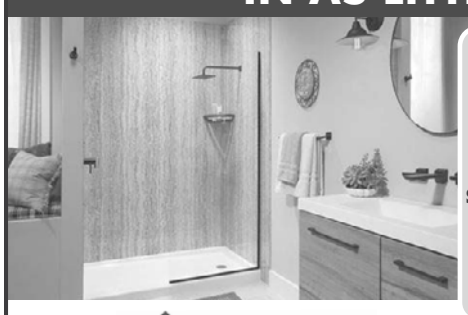

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PUBLIC NOTICE

HOWARD TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF REVIEW

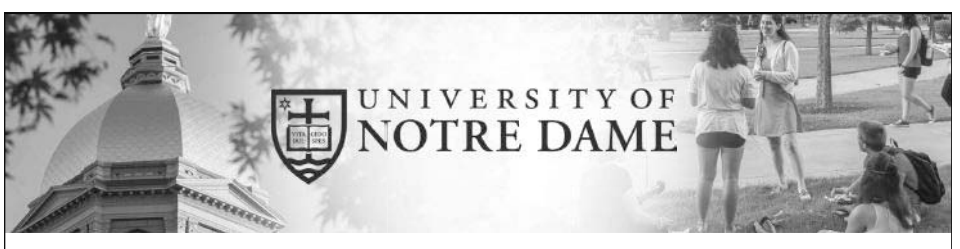
The Organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 12:30 pm at the Howard Township Hall, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles. No appeals of 2025 assessments will be heard at this time. The Board of Review will hear appeals on the 2025 assessments on Monday, March 10, 3:00 pm - 9:00 pm and Tuesday, March 11, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Resident and non-resident property owners may protest by letter if received by 12 pm on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. Estimated multipliers for each class of property for 2025 are as follows:

Agricultural…....1.2900
Commercial…..... 1.0948
Industrial….....1.1171
Residential…....1.0741

The tentative ratio for each class is 50%. The inflation rate multiplier for use in calculating 2025 capped value is 1.031

The Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those with disabilities planning to attend upon three (3) days' notice to the Township Clerk. If you require such aids or services and plan to appeal in person, please call the Township.

Shalice Northrop, Howard Township Assessor



Metadata Services Librarian

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Duties:
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Requirements:
Master's degree in Library and Information Science or related. One year of experience in cataloging, metadata, or related technical services activities, including knowledge of related tools and standards such as RDA, LCSH, and MARC. One year of experience managing an integrated library system (ILS), including maintaining data integrity, troubleshooting technical issues, and developing best practices for metadata creation, modification, and harvesting to enhance discoverability and usability of the library's collections. Provide training and support for staff in the effective use of the ILS, ensuring alignment with industry standards and practices. Full-time. decisions. Managing web design and content management systems, particularly Salesforce Full-time.

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•SEASONED FIREWOOD
SAME DAY SERVICE, EXCELLENT CLEAN-UP
*60 & 80 FT. BUCKET TRUCK
FULLY INSURED.
PLEASE CALL 574-848-5845.

Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO BID

PROJECT NAME:
Niles High School Roof Area C & D Improvements
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
BASE BID: (6,340 SF)
Leave existing asphalt built-up roof in place and clean surface. Mechanically fasten new 2" base layers of insulation and adhere 1/8" tapered insulation to achieve a minimum R-12. Install fully adhered 45 mil fleece-back KEE roofing membrane. provide manufacturer's 20-year ndl warranty.
ALTERNATE 1:
Provide an additional 1.5" layer of insulation fully adhered over base layer to achieve a minimum R-21. Add 2x wood nailers at roof edge as needed to accommodate insulation thickness.
ALTERNATE 2:
Provide an additional 1.5" layer of insulation fully adhered over alternate 1 to achieve a minimum R-30. Add 2x wood nailers at roof edge as needed to accommodate insulation thickness.
OWNER: Niles Community Schools 1 Tyler Street
Niles, MI 49120
(Administrative Offices)
ARCHITECT: CARMI Design Group 210 E. Main Street, Ste. 200 P.O. Box 487
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: 269-663-5073
BID DATE:
Bids will be received at the district's Administrative Offices until **3:00 PM (local time), on Thursday, March 13th, 2025**. Bids will be publicly opened at the Administrative Offices and read aloud at this time. Bids received after this time will not be considered and will be returned to the bidder unopened.
Bids shall be properly and completely executed on the Bid Proposal Form included within the Project Manual and submitted in duplicate. Bids shall be clearly marked as **"Niles High School Roof Area C & D Improvements"** on the front of the submitted envelope.
PRE-BID MEETING:
A **mandatory** Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 6th, 2025 at 3:00 PM (local time)** at the High School. Please meet at the gym and auditorium entrance (Door #34) on the east side of the high school.
DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY AND USE:
Bid Documents may be viewed at the following **Plan Rooms** on or after **Thursday, February 27th, 2025.**
Builders Exchange of Kalamazoo www.builder-exchange.com
Builders Exchange of Lansing www.bxlansing.com
Builders Exchange of Michigan www.grbx.com
Construction Association of Michigan www.BuildwithCAM.com
ConstructConnect www.constructconnect.com
Dodge Construction Network www.construction.com
MACIAF (South Bend, IN) www.constructionsite.org
Bidding documents are available electronically at no charge, via email.
Please email your request to: cadmin@carmi.biz
BONDS:
A five percent (5%) Bid Bond shall accompany bids over $50,000.00. The successful bidder will be required to provide a Performance Bond, Labor and Material Bonds, and certificates of Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance.
OTHER CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION:
1. Each bid shall be accompanied by a sworn and notarized statement disclosing any familial relationship that exists between the owner or any employee of the bidder and any member of the Niles Community Schools board of education or the superintendent of the school district.
2. No bidder may withdraw their bid for a period of **Thirty (30) calendar days** after the date set for bid opening.
3. Public Act 517 of 2012 (effective December 31, 2012) enacted the "Iran Economic Sanctions Act", which prevents "Iran linked businesses" from bidding on a school district or ISD's request for proposals ("RFP"). This law requires that persons submitting bids certify that they are not an "Iran linked business," which is defined as either:
a) A person engaging in investment activities in the energy sector of Iran, including a person that provides oil or liquefied natural gas tankers or products used to construct or maintain pipelines used to transport oil or liquefied natural gas for the energy sector of Iran; or
b) A financial institution that extends credit to another person, if that person will use the credit to engage in investment activities in the energy sector of Iran.
4. This is a prevailing wage project. The awarded contractor will be required to pay not less than the current published rates.
5. Niles Community Schools reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or irregularities in bids, and to accept any bid which is deemed most advantageous to the public interest.

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1, 2025
BIDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
ONTWA TOWNSHIP
RESIDENTS

The Ontwa Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed township budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 on Thursday, March 10th, 2025, at 6:30 pm.
The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.
A copy of the proposed budget is available in the Township Office on Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and is also posted on the township website at ontwatwp.org
The Ontwa Township Board will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon seven (7) day notice to the Ontwa Township Board by writing or calling the following:
Clerk Tina VanBelle, P.O. Box 209 Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112 Phone: 269-663-2347
Notice complies with MCL 141.436 & MCL 211.24e
Tina VanBelle
Ontwa Township Clerk

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1, 2025
HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF BUCHANAN
CITY COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the City Commission of the City of Buchanan, Berrien County, State of Michigan will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 10th, 2025, at Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Redbud Trail, Buchanan, Michigan. The purpose of the public hearing is to hear public comments on a proposed Dwelling Unit Registration Ordinance (Ordinance 2025.03/441). At the hearing, all interested parties will be given the opportunity to be heard. The proposed Ordinance can be found on our website, or a copy can be obtained at City Hall 302 N. Redbud Trail Buchanan, MI 49107.
If you cannot attend the public hearing, written comments can be sent to Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Redbud Trail, Buchanan, Michigan 49107 or emailed to City Clerk Kalla Langston at Clerk@cityofbuchanan.com and must be received by noon on Monday, March 10 th , 2025.

Kalla Langston
City Clerk

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1, 2025
HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE

Please take notice Aloha Storage located at 3001 South 11th Street Niles MI 49120 intends to hold an auction of storage units in default of payment. The sale will occur at the facility on 3/25/2025 at 12:00PM.
Unless otherwise stated in the below list of Unit #'s the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Unit #J20C. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1 and 8, 2025
L2L- 56877

PUBLIC NOTICE

HOWARD TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FEBRUARY 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.

Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 1/21/25 and 2/4/25 Board Meetings
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,386,323.49 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through February 18, 2025
Approved the departmental reports
Public Comment Public comment occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 7:16pm

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1, 2025
MEETING SYNOPSIS

PUBLIC NOTICE

HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF WEED ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT
MARCH 1, 2025

Section 302.4.1 The Township shall give notice by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Township during the month of March.
Weeds and/or plant growth in violation of this ordinance not destroyed/cut by May 1st of 2025, as required by this Ordinance may be destroy/cut by the Township, and that the owner of any such land shall be charged with the expenses incurred by the Township to destroy/cut such weeds/plants growth as many times as is necessary to keep the land in compliance with this ordinance, and that the Township shall have a lien against the land for the amount of such expenses, and that such lien shall be enforced in the manner provided by state law for the enforcement of real property tax liens.

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 1, 2025
WEEDS

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
BERRIEN COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
CASE NO. and JUDGE
205-0068-DE-J

Court address 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085
Court telephone no. 269-983-7111

Estate of DENIS LAUREL GIBBS Date of birth: 03/06/1945
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Denis Laurel Gibbs, died 01/02/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Kathleen Gibbs, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
02/20/2025

Kathleen Gibbs
420 Carefree Court
Niles, MI 49120

Peter W. Smith, P22999
423 Sycamore, Suite 102, P.O. Box 67
Niles, MI 49120, 269/683-3300

Niles Daily Star: Mar. 1, 2025
EST/GIBBS, D.

Legal Notices

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LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
BERRIEN COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
CASE NO. and JUDGE
2025-0067-DE-R
Hon. Brian S. Berger

Court address 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085
Court telephone no. 269-983-7111

Estate of PAMELA SUE STANLEY Date of birth: 12/04/1962
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Pamela Sue Stanley, died 02/09/2023. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Michael Nichols, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
02/21/2025

Michael Nichols
1408 Woods Eagle Dr.
Niles, MI 49120

Peter W. Smith, P22999
423 Sycamore, Suite 102, P.O. Box 67
Niles, MI 49120, 269-683-3300

Niles Daily Star: Mar. 1, 2025
EST/STANLEY, P.

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1 The HughesNet Gen5 service plans are designed to deliver download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps, but individual customers may experience different speeds at different times of the day. Speeds and uninterrupted use are not guaranteed and may vary based on a variety of factors including: the configuration of your computer, the number of concurrent users, network or Internet congestion, the capabilities and content of the Websites you are accessing, network management practices as deemed necessary, and other factors. When you connect to the HughesNet service using Wi-Fi, your experience will vary based on your proximity to the Wi-Fi source and the strength of the signal.
2. **Free standard installation** applies to new Lease subscribers only. Not valid with Purchase option. Limited-time offer. Restrictions may apply.
3. Per the "5th, 6th, 7th and 8th FCC Measuring Broadband American Reports." Go to: https://www.hughes.com/who-we-are/resources/press-releases/
- Minimum term required. Monthly service and early termination fees apply. Visit legal.HughesNet.com for details.
- HughesNet is a registered trademark of Hughes Network Systems, LLC, an EchoStar Company.

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Fully serviced with every option
Only $5,900

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Leather, moonroof, looks, runs, and drives great
Only $9,900

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Fully serviced and ready to tote your family around
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Showroom new with super low miles
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2016 KIA SOUL
Only 62,000 miles, save thousands on this low miler
Only $11,900

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Only 53,000 miles
Only $12,900

PONTIAC SOLSTICE
Low miles, great shape…Nice car to drive to car shows
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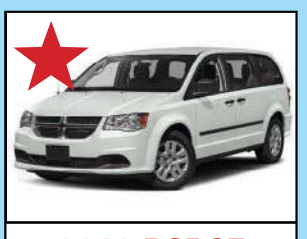

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Get you mini-van for the mini-mum
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Super clean widda price that's lean
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2019 CHEVY SILVERADO CREW HIGH COUNTRY 4 X 4
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Like new with full power options
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2019 KIA STINGER
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Extremely rare. Only 1 of 500. Will be a collector's item
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Only $29,900

2020 LINCOLN AVIATOR AWD
Every option!! Mint condition
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Crew cab, long box
Diesel, Low miles
Only $34,900

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2020 FORD EXPEDITION LIMITED MAXI 4 X 4
Every option, super condition.
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